

# Infantry

July-August 2008

## COIN Operations

**Revisiting Modern Warfare:  
The 3rd HBCT, 3rd ID's  
Experience in Mada'in  
Qada, Iraq (Page 24)**

**Clear, Hold, Build and the  
Development of Awakening  
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# Infantry

JULY-AUGUST 2008

Volume 97, Number 4

**MG WALTER WOJDAKOWSKI**  
Commandant, The Infantry School

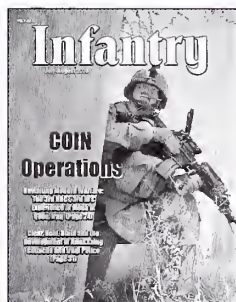
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**FRONT COVER:**

A Soldier with Company A, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, scans for enemy personnel during a joint clearing operation south of Salman Pak, Iraq, February 16. (Photo by Sergeant Timothy Kingston)

**BACK COVER:**

Soldiers with the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division move to their objective during an air assault mission in Iraq July 3. (Photo by Specialist Richard Del Vecchio)

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By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

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# Commandant's Note

MAJOR GENERAL WALTER WOJDAKOWSKI

## COUNTERINSURGENCY — SEIZING THE INITIATIVE

As we continue to aggressively prosecute the global war on terrorism (GWOT) we must remember that we execute tasks to standard, not to time, and that counterinsurgency (COIN) is no exception. Conducting COIN operations takes a great deal of tactical patience, and every operation sets the conditions for future success or missed opportunities. In this Commandant's Note I want to share some thoughts on COIN operations in the contemporary operational environment (COE). Some of the key points are the importance of conducting and sharing the results of intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB), and defining lines of operation in purpose driven operations, and the importance of understanding the needs of the civilian population.

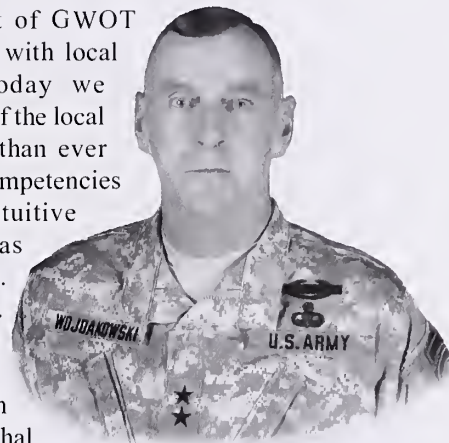
In the COIN fight, intelligence truly drives maneuver. Delayed analysis and exploitation can prevent units from getting inside the insurgents' decision cycle, so rapid analysis and exploitation of time sensitive information is critical. Nearly eighty percent of the intelligence derived in COIN is bottom fed and highly perishable; targets and enemy materiel can quickly disappear. Once we complete exploitation of the target, we must quickly disseminate information back to the people who need it. Combining this information and documenting lethal and non-lethal priority intelligence requirements are critical to success, yet we often do not push it back down to the Soldiers on the ground in a timely manner. Innovative methods to capture, record, and disseminate information up and down the chain of command and across boundaries are key competencies in COIN.

Our success in combat is a function of how quickly we mass units and fires. It starts with commanders articulating their strategy to achieve desired outcomes and end states. FM 3-0 clearly delineates between lines of operation and lines of effort and clearly explains how the application of these processes allows commanders to describe how they envision their operations toward achieving the end state. Using such models allows staffs to synchronize warfighting functions and lethal and non-lethal operations to achieve operational objectives. The problem with such conceptual planning and thinking is that we cannot always easily convert the intent into definable and understood mission orders. Brigade combat team, battalion, and company-level commanders share the ownership in translating operational and strategic goals into tactical level operations. They affirm this process by continuous, organized backbriefs and rehearsals for all operations. Our Soldiers need to know *why* they are conducting non-lethal operations and *how* their efforts are tied to the bigger picture. Soldiers need to recognize that their daily activities are well-thought out, purpose-driven operations that are part of a greater plan. As leaders we just need to take more time to properly articulate the importance and necessity of each and every patrol.

Another integral part of GWOT operations is our interface with local civilian populations. Today we understand the pivotal role of the local civilian population better than ever before. As our cultural competencies have strengthened, our intuitive grasp of the COE has broadened concomitantly. The phases of operations (i.e. Clear, Hold, Build) a unit faces during the urban fight will determine how much effort must be placed on lethal versus non-lethal options. When the security situation is such that the insurgent controls the key terrain — in many cases the people — then coalition forces and local indigenous forces will need to focus on lethal operations to gain and maintain security for the population. The transition between phases is not easy to identify — particularly in fluid situations in which one or more phases may be evolving simultaneously — but by identifying and applying valid, concrete indicators leaders can ensure they recognize the transition and can shape events.

Handling change in the COIN environment is tied to giving commanders feedback on how the fight is unfolding and maintaining the support of the local populace. To influence the population, units must have an open dialogue with key leaders and interact daily with the locals. Once we have transitioned to the Hold or Build phase, our physical demeanor should evolve to a more approachable mode. Remember, at this point we are dealing with people who have their own concerns and can tell the difference between units and leaders who are sincere versus those who are just going through the motions. When dealing with the local population we must prove ourselves every day. Meeting expectations and delivering on joint initiatives over time will cement relationships. We must broker all incentives through the local people, supported by the coalition and local government. To cement these bonds, the local government and security forces must be seen as equal partners and equal lenders in all dialogues. Remember, the Marshall Plan that rebuilt those portions of Europe over which we had influence after World War II succeeded because it demonstrated our credibility and our commitment, and because it worked within the framework of a newly reconstituted civilian authority. Continued partnership with the people and the local government prevents the insurgent from reseeding in the local populace; this makes it easier to find, fix, and finish him.

Follow me!





# Command Sergeant Major's Corner

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR WILLIAM J. ULIBARRI

## COIN: WHEN ADAPTABILITY MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

One of the unique aspects of counterinsurgency (COIN) operations is that conditions are constantly changing as insurgents quickly modify tactics and adapt to our actions. We are fighting “a hostile, thinking, and adaptive enemy” as described in FM 3-0, *Operations*, but we cannot forget that the infantrymen in our own squads and platoons think and adapt as well as, if not better than, our enemy. As leaders develop and refine their situational understanding, success may depend largely on the extent to which leaders are able to learn from those adaptive squads and platoons. While terrain, physical environment, and conditions are somewhat stable and relatively easy to adapt to, changing enemy tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) are more complex and elusive, and require our constant attention.

At the small unit level, an infantryman's ability to learn, adapt, and act is crucial, and shared information makes this possible. Post operational debriefs, hotwashes or after action reviews provide an excellent forum to learn from our comrades and their own perspectives on a recently completed operation or action. For example, the M1151 driver of the lead vehicle may have a distinctly different experience compared to that of the trail vehicle's .50 cal gunner.

It is important for leaders to provide the opportunity for Soldiers to discuss at least the significant events of each patrol. Learning from — and sharing — our own and others' experience in our organization is extremely valuable and provides a reference point from which we can learn from and disseminate the lessons learned across the Army and to other services. Our squad leaders and platoon sergeants are at their best as they lead Soldiers in the preparation and execution of missions; however, we must closely examine and assess their skills in coordination and planning operations as well. A lessons learned process at the unit level might assist in collecting, codifying, and disseminating information across a task force.

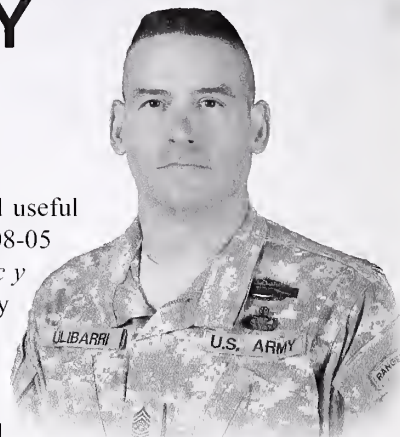
Another reference point from which we begin our education is our own COIN doctrine, published in FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*. NCOs should become familiar with FM 3-24 because it articulates established, enduring principles and tenets for COIN operations. While FM 3-24 is official Army doctrine, there are other learning resources published by the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL). These publications provide an array of articles, submitted by Soldiers from around the Army and gleaned from our own professional bulletins, consolidated in handbook or newsletter form. CALL publications enable all to learn from others' experience and to in turn give voice to their own experience so that their information may be passed along to others. Some COIN-specific publications

small unit leaders may find useful include CALL Newsletter 08-05 *Counterinsurgency Organization* (February 2008); CALL Handbook 07-6 *Southern Afghanistan COIN Operations* (October 2006); CALL Handbook 08-11 *COIN Patrolling* (April 2008);

CALL Newsletter 08-25 *A Battalion Task Force in COIN: Stryker TF 2-1 IN*. These represent a small sampling of learning resources available from CALL; there are also Combat Training Center bulletins, newsletters, and trends; special editions; *News From the Front*; training techniques; and initial impressions reports. Each of these publications may be obtained from the CALL homepage: <http://call.army.mil> using the “Request for Information or a CALL Product” link.

If the Infantry is to continue to be a learning organization, NCOs must become proactive in sharing their training, combat experiences, and lessons learned. I challenge all squad leaders and platoon sergeants attending the Basic NCO Course (BNCOC) or Maneuver Advanced NCO Course (M/ANCOC) to consider writing an article for publication in *Infantry* or for a CALL publication to share their experience. Communicating lessons learned within and beyond our immediate organization is an effective way of extending our influence. CALL provides an excellent vehicle to disseminate lessons learned throughout the force. I encourage all leaders to use this powerful tool as a learning resource as well as to teach others. The NCOcorpsnet and other professional on-line forums may also be helpful in discussing lessons learned; however, it is always important to remember that what worked in Baghdad today may not work in Mosul tomorrow, and that we have to keep operations security in mind when exchanging information. Army Knowledge Online lets us exchange information with those authorized access and is another effective way to get the word out. The crucial point is that we are constantly thinking, expanding our knowledge, and developing our Soldiers to do the same. The authors of FM 3-24 note that “Adapting occurs as Soldiers and Marines apply what they have learned through study and experience, assess the results of their actions, and continue to learn during operations.” Our success in the global war on terrorism reflects the ability of our Soldiers and leaders to adapt, get inside the enemy's thought process, and hit him when he least expects it, and as a result we have now seized the initiative.

Follow me!





## CDID ENSURES SOLDIERS RETAIN DOMINANCE ON FUTURE BATTLEFIELDS

DON SANDO

The mission of the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCOE) is to provide the Nation with the world's best trained Infantry, Armor, and Cavalry Soldiers and adaptive leaders imbued with the Warrior Ethos; to provide a power projection platform capable of deploying and redeploying Soldiers, civilians, and units anywhere in the world on short notice; and to define capabilities for the Infantry and Armor to meet the needs of the future force. The Infantry and Armor Schools have a long tradition of training, preparing, and equipping our Soldiers to fight together and win. This culture of teamwork continues as we establish the MCOE.

The new organization within the MCOE primarily responsible for ensuring our Soldiers retain their dominance on all future battlefields is the Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate (CDID). Its mission is to develop operational and organizational concepts, requirements, and integrated capabilities across maneuver formations and into the joint, interagency, and multinational arena. CDID combines Armor, Cavalry, and Infantry capabilities development into a unified, effective team to support our Warfighters.

The director of CDID was recently selected and assumed duties in February 2008. With this move, both centers have taken another critical step toward the MCOE. CDID consists of several organizations responsible for overseeing conceptual development across the warfighting functions, developing and overseeing the fielding and sustainment of the Army's premier fighting vehicles and equipment, and providing the point of entry into the Generating Force for the brigade combat teams to address their issues and needs for the current fight and future requirements.

As early as Fiscal Year 2010, the CDID director will be supported by an integration staff who will assist in the development and transition of the organization. In the interim the staffs are working to prepare each center to integrate into CDID through a series of progressive milestones. Upon approval by the MCOE Board of Directors (chaired by the commanding

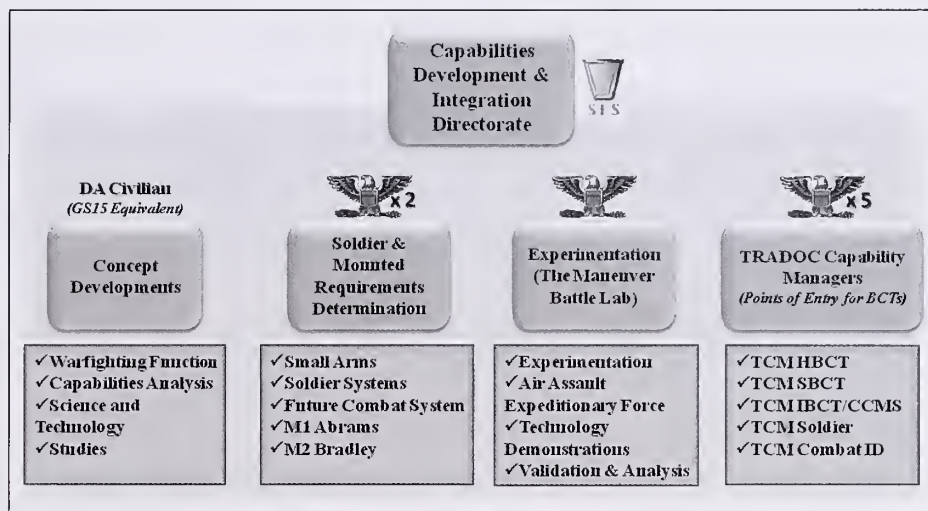


Figure 1 — CDID Organization

generals of the Armor and Infantry Centers), the CDID will establish a virtual operating capability. Equipment and personnel movements to Fort Benning will begin CDID's transition into an initial operating capability. When the transition is complete and CDID is operating under its objective organization, it will have reached final operating capability which will take place before September 15, 2011, according to guidelines in the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) law.

The transitional milestones will continue to be developed as both centers move toward the MCOE. Effective communications will inform the military, civilian personnel and the contracting force of key dates and timelines as CDID comes on line. CDID represents a unique opportunity to put what is best in each organization together to provide unparalleled support to our Nation's Warfighters. "One Force, One Fight."

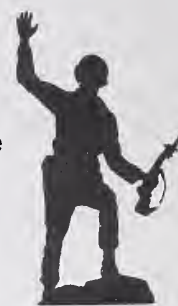
*(Don Sando was selected to the Senior Executive Service in February 2008 and is currently assigned as director of Capabilities Development and Integration for the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, Georgia. He is a 1981 graduate of the Military Academy and holds a Master of Science degree in Operations Research from the Air Force Institute of Technology, and a Master of Science degree in Strategic Studies from the Army War College. Mr. Sando completed more than 26 years of active duty service.)*



# 2008 INFANTRY WARFIGHTING CONFERENCE SET

The 2008 Infantry Warfighting Conference will be held September 15-17 at Fort Benning, Georgia. The theme for the conference is "The Infantry: Heart of America's Army in the Contemporary Operational Environment." Attendees should RSVP online NLT September 14. For more information, go online to [www.benning.army.mil](http://www.benning.army.mil) and click on the Infantry Warfighting Conference link or go to [www.fbcinc.com/infantry](http://www.fbcinc.com/infantry)

For more information, contact the IWC Operations Cell at [BENN.DOT.Confops@conus.army.mil](mailto:BENN.DOT.Confops@conus.army.mil) or (706) 545-4624/5868/0927/8891 (DSN 835-4624/5868/0927/8891)



## Tentative Agenda for 2008 IWC

### Monday, September 15

**7:30 - 8:50 a.m.** — National Infantry Association (NIA) Golf Scramble Breakfast (optional\*), Follow Me Golf Club, Fort Benning, Georgia

**8 a.m. - 6 p.m.** — Travel and Registration, Classroom 50, Infantry Hall or Registration Room, Columbus Convention & Trade Center (CCTC)

**9 a.m. to 3 p.m.** — National Infantry Association Golf Scramble Shotgun Start (optional\*), Follow Me Golf Club

**6 - 9 p.m.** — Icebreaker Reception, Riverside, Fort Benning (Rain Location: Benning Club)

### Tuesday, September 16

**8:30 - 9:20 a.m.** — Infantry Update by the Chief of Infantry, Main Auditorium, CCTC

**9:30 - 10:20 a.m.** — Senior Army Leader Update Main Auditorium, CCTC

**10:30 - 11:20 a.m.** — Senior TRADOC Leader Update Main Auditorium, CCTC

**11:30 a.m. - 12:50 p.m.** — Lunch and view displays Senior Leader Session (by invitation only), Meeting Rooms 103/104, CCTC

**1 - 1:50 p.m.** — MCOE Update by the Chief of Armor, Main Auditorium, CCTC

**2 - 5 p.m.** — Lessons Learned from Brigade Combat Team Commanders and CSMs, Main Auditorium, CCTC

**2 - 2:50 p.m.** — Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Main Auditorium, CCTC

**3 - 3:50 p.m.** — Heavy Brigade Combat Team, Main Auditorium, CCTC

**4 - 4:50 p.m.** — Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Main Auditorium, CCTC

**6:15 - 7 p.m.** — Cocktail Hour, Main Auditorium, CCTC

**7 p.m. - UTC** — Doughboy Awards Dinner, Dining Gallery, CCTC. See article on awardees on page 5.



### Wednesday, September 17

**8:30 - 9:20 a.m.** — Joint Readiness Training Center Update, Main Auditorium, CCTC

**9:30 - 10:20 a.m.** — National Training Center Update, Main Auditorium, CCTC

**10:30 - 11:20 a.m.** — Joint Multinational Training Center Update, Main Auditorium, CCTC

**11:30 a.m. - noon** — MCOE Futures Update, Director, Capabilities Development and Integration, Main Auditorium, CCTC

**12:10 - 1:30 p.m.** — Lunch and View Displays, Brigade/Battalion Commanders and CSMs (by invitation only), Foundry Room B, CCTC

**1:40 - 2:50 p.m.** — Breakout Session: Leaders Panel, Main Auditorium, CCTC

**1:40 - 2:10 p.m.** — Breakout Session: Post Combat Survey, 2nd Floor, CCTC

**2:10 - 2:40 p.m.** — Breakout Session: Land Warrior in OIF, 2nd Floor, CCTC

**2:40 - 3:10 p.m.** — Breakout Session: Stryker Family of Vehicle Upgrades, 2nd Floor, CCTC

**3:10 - 4:40 p.m.** — Breakout Session: The Improved Target Acquisition System (ITAS) and Long Range Advanced Scout Surveillance System (LRAS3), 2nd Floor, CCTC

**4:45 - 5:00 p.m.** — Closing Remarks, Chief of Infantry, Main Auditorium, CCTC

**6 - 9:50 p.m.** — Grill Your Own Steak Night, Benning Club, Fort Benning

\* Not part of the official agenda, no command endorsement of this event is implied.

# 2008 DOUGHBOY AWARDEES ANNOUNCED

The Home of the Infantry is proud to announce that General (Retired) Henry H. Shelton and Command Sergeant Major (Retired) Gary L. Littrell will be the honored recipients of the 2008 Doughboy Award in recognition of their many contributions to the Infantry. The awards will be presented during a dinner September 16. General Shelton retired from active duty in October 2001 after 38 years of service. He was the 14th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and served in that position from 1997 until his retirement. GEN Shelton began his Army career as a platoon leader with the 2nd Infantry Division and then 1st Cavalry Division, both at Fort Benning, Georgia. He also served as a platoon leader with the 5th Special Forces Group in Vietnam. Other assignments include serving as Commander in Chief of the U.S. Special Operations Command, Commanding General of the XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg, and Commanding General of the 82nd Airborne Division.



GEN Shelton



CSM Littrell

CSM Littrell was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on April 4-8, 1970, in Kontum Province, Republic of Vietnam. A sergeant first class at the time, Littrell was serving as an Infantry advisor with the 23rd Battalion, 2nd Ranger Group, South Vietnamese Army. According to his Medal of Honor citation, "SFC Littrell exhibited near superhuman endurance as he single-handedly bolstered the besieged battalion. Repeatedly abandoning positions of relative safety, he directed artillery and air support by day and marked the unit's location by night, despite the heavy, concentrated enemy fire... Assault after assault was repulsed as the battalion responded to the extraordinary leadership and personal example exhibited by SFC Littrell as he continuously moved to those points most seriously threatened by the enemy, redistributed ammunition, strengthened faltering defenses, cared for the wounded and shouted encouragement to the Vietnamese in their own language."

## FCS CAPABILITY ACCELERATED FOR IBCTs

C. TODD LOPEZ

Soldiers in infantry brigade combat teams (IBCTs) now get the first crack at Future Combat System (FCS) technology, Army officials said June 26.

That capability, initially meant to be delivered first to heavy brigade combat teams, will now be delivered to IBCTs by fiscal year 2011 — three years earlier than previously planned.

"As a result of capability gaps found in these IBCTs, the Army is accelerating the FCS complementary programs to provide capability to infantry units first," said

Lieutenant General Michael A. Vane, director of the Army Capabilities Integration Center. "These capabilities will increase their capability and survivability in offense, defense and stability operations."

Included in the equipment meant to be fielded to Soldiers are the tactical and urban unattended ground sensors, the Non Line of Sight-Launch System, the Class I unmanned aerial vehicle, the small unmanned ground vehicle and network kits for the Humvee platform.

Also closely associated with this initial

2011 spinout of FCS equipment will be the Ground Soldier Ensemble. Though the ensemble is not part of the FCS lineup, it does contribute to Soldier effectiveness, and it will be accelerated so it can coincide with the FCS spinout.

"A key part of this is enabling the Soldier, so part of this decision is to take the Ground Soldier Ensemble — the kit that enables the Soldier to be brought into the network — to bring that developmental timeline in line with the FCS program," said Lieutenant General N. Ross Thompson III, military deputy to the acting assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology.

Thompson also said the change in schedule would not change FCS program costs.

Lieutenant General Stephen M. Speakes, deputy chief of staff for programs and Army G8, said the change will have a dramatic affect on the way Soldiers today can fight in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"This re-evaluation is based on seven years of sustained combat," he said. "We believe that the change materially improves upon the capabilities we will provide to Soldiers, and has direct relevance to the current war fight."



TRADOC photo

*An Army Evaluation Task Force Soldier at Fort Bliss conducts training with an unattended ground sensor. The sensors are expected to be fielded to infantry Soldiers by 2011.*





## Infantry Battalion COIN Operations

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN LUTTRELL



Staff Sergeant Jon Soucy

*LTC John Luttrell (left), commander of the 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment, talks with members of the Al Furat Council August 31, 2007.*

The 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry "Mountain Warriors" mobilized for deployment to Iraq on June 27, 2006. The battalion reported to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, for post-mobilization training and began departing for Kuwait on September 27. The Mountain Warriors assumed their mission as an Area Defense Operations Center (ADOC) for Camp Slayer on October 30.

The battalion had a complex mission. Headquarters Company and Alpha Company were responsible for the base defense of Camp Slayer by manning entry control points and towers, while having Ugandan contractors augment additional towers. In addition, Alpha Company patrolled an area of operations (AO) known as AO Mountain Warrior, which was approximately a three-kilometer urban area through Al Furat, and HHC had one platoon designated as the quick reaction force (QRF) for the battalion. Bravo Company ran the Multi-National Force-Iraq Joint Visitors Bureau located on Camp Victory. This included running a hotel, convoy escort, and personal security details for all distinguished visitors entering Iraq. Charlie Company was responsible for base defense of the Radwanayah Palace Complex by manning entry control points and inner perimeter towers. In addition, C Company patrolled an AO (AO Mutt) that was approximately 12 kilometers in a rural area that consisted of a village named Makasib. The battalion had 80 Soldiers in civilian clothes with relaxed grooming standards providing operational security teams for the Strategic Command Intelligence Detachment and the Command Liaison Element. We deployed as a separate infantry battalion assigned to a Base Defense Operations Center (BDOC) for the Victory Base Complex along with two other active duty battalions and a National Guard brigade headquarters. We had no Iraqi Army, Iraqi National Police, or Iraqi National Guard assigned to the battalion, or to our brigade headquarters. Both AO Mountain Warrior and AO Mutt consisted of mainly Sunni Muslims from

various tribes. Neither Al Furat nor Makasib had any form of local government when we arrived.

### Combat Operations (AO Mountain Warrior & AO Mutt)

The battalion conducted more than 2,100 combat patrols and 28 battalion (-) cordon and search missions during the deployment. We had 142 small arms fire engagements with insurgents and numerous mortar and rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) attacks. We did conduct joint operations with Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police units. However, these were units that sought us out in order to conduct joint operations or ones that we asked for in order to conduct mosque raids or some type of joint operation. From my perspective, the Iraqi Army units were more organized and less corrupt than the Iraqi Police units. My Soldiers enjoyed working with the IA because of their professionalism and how they treated the local people. The IPs that worked in and around our area were made up of a majority of Shia Muslims; this caused conflict in Al Furat, since it was about 90 percent Sunni Muslim. A canal ran north to south separating AO Mountain Warrior (Al Furat, which was Sunni dominated) from Al Jihad (Shia dominated). The Shia and Sunni differences fueled sectarian violence in our area. In Makasib, the few existing Shia Muslims had lived there and fit in well with the Sunnis, therefore the sectarian violence was far less. However, there was more of a threat from Al Qaeda and other extremists (Taqfiri) in this area. Our main threat in this area was from improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

In our initial assessment, we wanted to clear AO Mountain Warrior from insurgents, extremists, militia, criminal elements or anyone else detrimental to stability. Since there had not been a consistent coalition force presence in this area since 2003, we needed



to focus on saturating the area with patrols. In our initial assessment of AO Mutt, we wanted to secure Makasib and the outlying area in order to prevent sectarian violence from spilling over into the Makasib area and to deter Al Qaeda influence. We averaged approximately 17 hours a day patrolling, with at least 70 percent of these patrols dismounted. Patrols that I will focus on here are **house assessments, mosque monitoring, council meetings, influential leaders meetings, and targeted searches.** Every patrol had to be approached as a combat operation. For example, while moving to an influential leaders meeting with a local imam (religious leader), my patrol was engaged and a firefight ensued for 45 minutes. Eventually, with attack aviation, the battalion QRF and help from an adjacent patrol with M2 Bradleys, we forced the enemy to break contact with us. We sustained no serious injuries, and the enemy incurred several casualties.

**House Assessments:** These were conducted in order to constantly gather information on established metrics for the AO and to evaluate the population and community. In addition, there was a heavy rate of migration in and out of Al Furat in the beginning of our deployment due to sectarian violence. Many times a militia element would evict the owners of a house and use it to conduct insurgent operations or as a safe house. By maintaining a constant assessment, we could determine if forceful displacement was occurring. The assessments also allowed us to gain the trust of the local citizens. First, they were getting assurance that we were providing security on a consistent basis. Second, they began to trust our Soldiers because our Soldiers asked about their needs (fuel, water, food, etc.) and respected their culture. Finally, we were able to determine who the local sheiks or other leaders were in the communities.

**Mosque Monitoring:** This was vital in order to keep in touch with the “pulse” of the local community. Iraq’s religion is an integral part of their society, and the imam is

a very respectful and influential person. Our patrols would set up a hasty checkpoint or sometimes even cordon the area of the mosque. In Al Furat we were responsible for four mosques. The security threat in the area where the mosque was located would often dictate the technique used for monitoring. For example, the Al Furat mosque, which bordered the canal separating Al Furat and Al Jihad, had been closed and was being used by militia. Once we conducted a clearing operation, we were able to reopen the mosque. However, we would often establish a cordon during monitoring in order to give the citizens a feeling of security. We would send a patrol set of four vehicles to the mosque. The patrol would establish an outer cordon with their vehicles and secure the block where the mosque was located. Next, the patrol would dismount and establish a loose inner cordon occupying key areas where they could interact with local citizens. By doing this, citizens gained a vital sense of security yet did not feel as if my Soldiers were interfering with their religious practice. The Al Furat mosque often sent out negative messages on a regular basis early in our deployment. After we brought security and stability to the area, the Al Furat Imam was very appreciative of this effort and felt like it afforded the citizens more of an opportunity to attend prayer at the mosque. In Makasib, we monitored two mosques. However, we never had any type of negative message come from either of these locations. As we began to establish our presence in

Al Furat, the messages turned positive, and good relationships were built through a constant presence.

**Council Meetings and Influential Leaders Meetings:** One of the civil-military areas of concern was the lack of local government. In Al Furat, there was not a local government and only a Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) appointee who did not even live in the neighborhood. In Makasib, there was a person who had worked with the previous unit in obtaining a few projects for the community. He was well versed in how contracts were written, had good business sense, and was fearless. Through consistent patrolling, we were able to identify the influential people in the area. In order to do this, patrols needed to dismount and interact with the local populace daily. Tribal councils were initially formed of local sheiks. Understanding the tribal society in Iraq was critical and allowed us to assess initial concerns from the sheiks. We wanted to separate the tribal council from the city council in a delicate manner. This was accomplished by incorporating influential members of the community with some of the sheiks in order to form a city council. In Al Furat, we had a dentist, a former Saddam-era Iraqi captain and engineer, and a teacher, along with two sheiks forming the council. In Makasib, we had the person who had worked with the previous unit, an educator, and two sheiks form a city council. Initially, these were done without elections. However, there were elections in both areas before our deployment ended. Each council would have weekly meetings. The company commander responsible for the area attended each meeting, and I would attend at least one every two weeks.

I also conducted influential leaders meetings with local imams, sheiks, business men, or headmasters of local schools. By establishing an early dialogue, trust, and building relationships, we were able to gain valuable intelligence on militia and criminal activity in the area. On one occasion in Al Furat,



Courtesy photo

*The author discusses issues with key Iraqi civilian leaders.*



a mortar attack on one of my dismounted patrols was called off. A local militia leader had a mortar positioned and had called for ammunition. When one of the council members found out, he immediately confronted the militia leader and told him that the attack would disrupt all of the good happening in the community and only upset the Americans. An attack which could have inflicted severe casualties on my dismounts was stopped because of the relationships that we had built.

On another occasion in Makasib, I was notified by one of the local council members of an IED on a road where three vehicles had been hit in the last 10 days. The IED was 350 pounds of homemade explosive (HME) buried underneath a bridge. After dispatching a patrol and confirming the IED, we brought Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) out to dismantle the IED. While EOD was working on the bridge, a local sheik called and told us that we were sitting on an IED. I acknowledged that we knew an IED was on the bridge and were working on it. He informed me that the IED he was talking about was out beside of one of our M1151 HMMWVs. I radioed the company commander who was on the ground and informed him of the intelligence. The patrol found two artillery rounds command-wired and buried in the side of the road near one of our vehicles. Both IEDs were disposed of and another attack which could have had devastating casualties was avoided because of relationships and trust that our unit had forged.

**Targeted Searches:** This type of patrol occurred frequently during the early months of our deployment, especially due to the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets and feeds from these assets available to my battalion. A patrol may be sent to search a specific house, building, or courtyard based on human intelligence (HUMINT) or an ISR asset. These types of patrols were more common in AO Mountain Warrior rather than AO Mutt due to the urban area of Al Furat. Numerous insurgents and weapons caches were captured by patrols conducting targeted searches. Some of these patrols were planned and others were hastily executed due to actionable or time-sensitive intelligence. Therefore, the units had to be proficient in standard operating procedures

on how to conduct this type of mission. On some missions, we would emplace small kill teams from our snipers in order to provide overwatch and report information on the target. Rapidly securing and entering the target area were critical to success. Our enemy rarely wanted to stand and fight it out with us. He was, however, proficient at blending into the local populace, using secondary explosive devices, and employing hoax IEDs. The majority of the time, Soldiers had to clear from the bottom up, unless they were moving to adjacent houses or buildings that could be reached from one roof to another. The QRF was always ready to react in order to reinforce the patrol, facilitate the evacuation of casualties, or any other action deemed necessary. Through the use of ISR assets with a direct feed to our ADOC, information could be radioed directly to the patrol to include grid coordinates and target description. At times, target searches were hastily executed, and often the cordon would have to leapfrog in order to continue the search. One of my biggest concerns was making sure the dismounts were always covered and supported by the gunners from their vehicles. In addition, communications for dismounts were paramount. A great tool for us that our state provided was the secure

XT-5000 Motorola radio. All platoon sergeants and above carried these on patrol which supplemented the multiband inter/intra team radio (MBITR). By having the necessary communication, a patrol leader could place a two-to-three-man team on a roof in order to support the search and have secure communication between dismounts and vehicles.

### **Intelligence and Information Gathering (AO Mountain Warrior and AO Mutt)**

As stated above, ISR assets were critical to the success of our operations. Live feeds into the ADOC from the aerostat balloon, the Joint Land Attack Elevated Netted Sensor System (JLENS) camera, or tower-mounted cameras on the perimeter allowed information to be collected on targets, population activity, confirm or deny enemy courses of action, and maintain a battalion common operating picture. Because we did not deploy as part of a brigade combat team (BCT), we did not have unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Therefore, the camera assets were tools that our battalion relied on for information gathering. Even though the aerostat feed went directly into the ADOC, we did not have control of the camera. However, we could request the



Staff Sergeant Jon Soucy

*Soldiers from Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment scan their surroundings as they patrol through Al Furat August 20, 2007.*





Specialist Leith Edgar

*The author meets with a class of Iraqi students in the Al Rasul school west of Baghdad April 17. Soldiers with the battalion dropped off school supplies and toured the newly remodeled facility during the visit.*

aerostat through one of the ADOC computers. On some missions, we would request and receive approval for the aerostat for a specific time frame. We would then place a liaison in the aerostat cell so that we did not have to rely entirely on the computer. The ability to track insurgents as they moved from one rooftop to another or as they entered a house one way and then exited another enhanced our success rate at capturing weapons, detaining insurgents or criminals, and increased force protection for our Soldiers. We literally had eyes in the sky. Limitations were weather, such as wind and sand, as well as maintenance on the balloon.

Every combat patrol gathered some type of intelligence or information. Intelligence gathering is a big part of the coalition forces' and the Iraqi forces' mission — Every Soldier Is a Sensor. Also, we wanted to be able to monitor information throughout the communities we operated. Any change of attitude from the citizens could mean a spike in attacks on our patrols, that threats from local militias were being made, or possibly a surge of sectarian violence. By constantly visiting with the locals, we could monitor the atmospherics as well as gather information. In doing this, we were able to attack the insurgents' will to fight and any unity that they were trying to build. Continuous communication with the local leaders and populace was vital. Much of the insurgency is sourced through economic, religious, or tribal means. For example, an IED that is placed would likely have a cell to produce the IED, a cell to transport it to the area, and then hire a teenager or some young adult to emplace the IED for \$100. Therefore, it may not be necessary to seek total destruction of the insurgents, but only to shatter their will to fight and cohesiveness. Because of strict rules of engagement (ROE) and wanting to limit collateral damage, firepower was not always

our best weapon in counterinsurgency operations. Through information gathering and many times treating an area like a crime scene, we could gather evidence and build detention packets to take insurgent leaders off the streets. The ability to gather evidence and build a case for detention was a steep learning curve for the entire battalion. My S2 did an excellent job in getting outside resources to teach our patrols how to gather information and evidence in order to build solid detention cases.

Two other forms of intelligence and

information gathering assets that were successful were HUMINT and signal intelligence (SIGINT). Using a HUMINT source, we were able to capture a large cache just outside our perimeter wall with several RPGs, artillery rounds, mortar rounds, anti-tank mines, anti-personnel mines, HME, assault rifles, and various other ammunition and weapons that could have been used in a complex attack against us. The unique thing about this source is that the person was a Sunni giving us information on other Sunni insurgents, which was rare. Usually, we received information from Shias regarding Sunnis or vice versa. This source was later killed while confirming identification of a high value target (HVT) for us at a mosque in Al Furat. The HVT had called the source and asked to meet him at the mosque. The source contacted us and told us of the meeting; he felt it was an ambush to kill him. We asked him not to attend the meeting. However, he said his death was inevitable and he would meet the HVT. I placed a patrol set at a gate near the mosque in order to react to anything. When the source pulled up in his vehicle, men came out of the mosque and opened fire. I launched the patrol, and they immediately began treating the wounds of the source and securing the area. However, the victim bled out quickly, and the HVT escaped. This source is an example of the commitment by Iraqi citizens to have a better life even if it meant their own death.

Again, by not being part of a BCT, we did not have the SIGINT assets afforded to other battalions. However, we did establish a very good relationship with the C2. The C2 was responsible for all intelligence operations under Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I) and was under the command of Lieutenant General Raymond T. Odierno. Through this relationship, we were able to target and eliminate two indirect fire (IDF) cells targeting the Victory Base



Complex. In addition, we conducted a joint operation with the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry in which we captured two men involved in the kidnapping of two 10th Mountain Division Soldiers. Again, SIGINT was the asset that allowed complete success without sustaining any coalition force casualties.

### Civil-Military Operations (CMO)

This was a crucial area that I overlooked during pre-mobilization planning and training. In developing a deployment roster with a mobilization cap dictated by the National Guard Bureau, I had to prioritize slots. In doing this, I cut the CMO NCO and two assistants and left a major as the CMO officer. Once we arrived in theater, I quickly realized the significance of this mistake. However, we were still short manpower on manning towers, entry control points, and patrols. Therefore, I moved a very intelligent lieutenant in as the assistant CMO officer. Through civil-military operations, we were able to complete nearly \$2 million in projects for the citizens of Iraq in a 12-month period. As mentioned earlier, the building of relationships, trust, and being able to take leverage away from the insurgents on an economic basis was critical to our success and the fact that we did not have a single Soldier killed in combat.

Initially, I wanted to gain a foothold in the communities by addressing needs of the citizens. I decided the best avenue for this would be humanitarian aid drops. Since the drops would occur in the early stages of trying to establish a local government, I decided to make the drops at the Rahman Mosque, where I had developed a good relationship with the imam. This was the foothold that we needed to begin earning the trust of the people. During our deployment, I tried to focus the priority of effort in CMO towards education and not only securing the schools but refurbishing and reequipping them as well. Sectarian violence had deterred many children from attending school and several of the schools had significant damage from the fighting. We refurbished seven schools in AO Mountain Warrior and AO Mutt, while dropping needed school supplies to each location. We also had a sewage treatment facility built in the town of Makasib, which allowed raw sewage to be cleaned from the

streets. In my assessment, I felt that giving the people a sense of pride about their community would increase their willingness to keep it safe. One of the National Guard's greatest strengths is the fact that we are Citizen-Soldiers. Because of this, we have a great sense of community service and how to interact with communities.

One mission that seems to be tasked to the National Guard often is convoy logistic patrols (CLPs), which is essentially a convoy escort from one forward operating base to another. In this type of mission, it is difficult to control your own destiny because you cannot build the relationships with the local populace in order to increase your force protection. However, we were able on a daily basis to control our own destiny by our interaction with Iraqis. We did this by respecting their culture and their traditions, listening to their side of the story, and being brutally honest with them at all times. One of my biggest sayings to local leaders was, "If I have it, then it is yours; if I do not have it, then I will not promise it to you." These people had been given empty promises for years and we needed to show that when we said something, it would happen.

Finally, Sunni reconciliation began prior to our departure. Mirroring the "Awakening" in Al Anbar province, local Sunni sheiks were being asked to form volunteer police groups and establish checkpoints or even in some cases patrol neighborhoods in order to defeat Al Qaeda and other extremist organizations. In actuality, we were probably one of the first to initiate this. In Makasib, we allowed them early on to establish checkpoints with armed guards going into and coming out of the town. In conjunction with 1-18th Infantry, we began to establish checkpoints throughout the Radwanayah area. We helped three local sheiks in our area establish five checkpoints made up of local Sunni volunteers. We helped with the construction of the checkpoints but did not furnish any weapons or pay. Initially, we used a humanitarian aid drop to be distributed among the volunteers because we were not allowed to pay them for their service. However, through the efforts of 1-18, we did get payment started for every checkpoint in the Radwanayah area before we departed. This effort drastically reduced IED emplacement. As a last ditch effort to

maintain an insurgent foothold in Makasib, a suicide bomber attacked Makasib in August. The local guards shot the attacker before he got into the city council building, but he was still able to detonate himself. We responded and evacuated the local guards for treatment and all survived. The checkpoints had solidified the Radwanayah area and brought stability to the area. We were able to quickly put this plan into action for a couple of reasons: First, the Makasib city council chairman was the business savvy and fearless leader with whom we initially began relations and who had been an important ally to us. Second, we had developed good relations with the local sheiks through constant visits and projects in their area of influence. They believed in us enough to start the checkpoints knowing that the volunteers may not get paid.

We realized that kicking in doors and hunting targets were only part of fighting an insurgency. The biggest part was building relationships and a better way of life in the communities. Through various types of patrolling techniques and a proactive civil-military operations strategy, the Mountain Warriors brought security, stability, and a better way of life to the people of Al Furat and Makasib. Citizen-Soldiers are unique and bring an abundance of talent and skills to a unit. Units need to use these strengths when they are conducting counterinsurgency operations. As National Guard Soldiers, we are a community-based organization. We are trained in responding to natural disasters and other emergencies that provide aide to the citizens of our community. In addition, we are trained in our military occupation skills in order to accomplish our military objectives. During the 1-149th's deployment, these combined assets proved to be a successful formula for COIN operations.

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# COIN CLIFF NOTES:

## *Techniques for the Conventional Rifle Platoon in Layman's Terms*

CAPTAIN CRAIG COPPOCK

There are many books, manuals, and articles that define strategies and principles for counterinsurgency (COIN) success. No one author is completely right and no one is completely wrong; they all have great information and tools to add to your arsenal. This document is not a complete lesson on counterinsurgency theory and strategy, but is rather a collection of counterinsurgent and counterguerrilla techniques that I believe are relevant to the current fight in Iraq. This paper is written with an intended primary audience of rifleman through platoon leader, though the information is applicable to company-level leadership as well. Remember that these are only techniques learned by one infantry platoon in a specific place (central Iraq) at a specific time (June 2006 to September 2007). The decision whether or not to adopt and implement these techniques is entirely yours. However, using techniques specifically aimed at counterinsurgency and counterguerrilla warfare is critical to supporting your commander's greater strategy. While it is true that every area of operations (AO) is different, the overarching COIN principles will apply anywhere. You just have to figure out

the finer tactical means of employing them, and that is where this paper will help you out.

**Your COIN fight starts long before you deploy.** An easy way to begin is to select a few good articles or books and have all the senior leaders in your platoons and company read them. One excellent paper on company-level operations is "Twenty-Eight Articles" by Australian Army Lieutenant Colonel David Kilcullen, which was printed in the May-June 2006 issue of *Military Review*. Get together once a week and talk about what you have read. The goal is to come together on a company COIN strategy. This is not an absolute set of rules to live by but it puts everyone on the same page, will help you task organize, and gives leaders a common language to collaborate in. A good company commander will guide this process but the platoon leaders and executive officer can spearhead it just as effectively. This process should start at least two months out from deployment, hopefully earlier. By that time the reality of deployment has hit and leaders have that extra bit of focus and motivation. If you are lucky, you will also know which region you will be operating in.



Photos courtesy of author

*Soldiers should be out on foot in the AO so as to not alienate the local populace.*

**Boots on the ground.** You should be out on foot in your AO every time you roll out of the wire. Of course you may have to drive to get there, but you can't conduct any business from inside a vehicle. Not only will you miss many of the ever-changing physical details of your AO, but you will alienate the local populace. Be known as the friendly, professional Soldier (which can only be achieved face-to-face) versus the occupier (mobbing through the neighborhood in a Bradley).

**Learn the language.** The platoon leader will usually have an interpreter, but the Soldiers are going to be the first ones into a house and must have a basic understanding of the language. Have your interpreter teach you a short list of phrases like "Hello, we are conducting a routine search" and "Do you have any weapons in





*Knowing the layout of your AO's streets and buildings will allow leaders to out-maneuver the enemy in a firefight.*

the house?" to make your sudden presence less intimidating and intrusive to the locals. Of course once you have security established, you will use the interpreter to go more in depth.

Also, if you don't already have a good language tool, try <http://field.support.lingnet.org>.

**Every time you patrol, learn and record as much information as you can.** If you spend time in someone's house you should leave knowing every relevant piece of information on that family. What is relevant is something you will have to figure out on your own and it may take a few weeks. Here are a few subjects that are probably relevant most anywhere in present-day Iraq:

❑ **Names:** Always get the complete name. The Arabic naming convention includes a lot of information. The family name is very important because different families have different allegiances and connections. Same thing for their tribe.

❑ **Sunni or Shiite:** Many will be hesitant to answer. Work it into your conversation in an inquisitive, nonthreatening manner. Many times your interpreter will be able to determine this by their dress or the religious artifacts they have displayed in their home. Your Soldiers can learn these indicators

fairly quickly. This information is important because of the highly volatile sectarian violence that is occurring in Iraq. Tracking the religious makeup of your AO and how it changes over time will be a good indicator of the current state of sectarian violence.

❑ **How long have they lived in that house?** In one neighborhood in Baghdad, for example, there was a mix of longtime residents and recent move-ins. The longtime residents were mostly (but not completely) not involved in insurgent activity and were generally more willing to give information. However, the recent move-ins were either militia members or were displaced from another area due to sectarian violence. Finding where these recent move-ins came from and why they moved can tell you how locals perceive your AO and what is going on in the surrounding areas. Cross-check this information with their neighbors to see who is being truthful and who has something to hide.

❑ **What is their relationship with the local authorities (Iraqi Police/Iraqi Army [IP/IA])?** Do they like them? Do they trust them? Are they around and do they keep the neighborhood safe? If the locals have issues with the local authorities or are scared of them they will most likely tell you. Most Iraqis still view the U.S. Soldiers as the supreme authority. While we need to change this attitude by helping to mold the local authorities into a more legitimate force, it is what it is. You can sometimes learn more from the locals about the IA/IP than from your visits to IA/IP compounds.

❑ **What do they do for a living?** This question will reveal a whole world of information to you. It will teach you about the local economy, unemployment rates, the municipal structure, and the types of assets the locals have available to them, such as ice factories and gasoline.

You will get this information best through conversation, not direct questioning (though at times it may come to that). Learn what is important to the local populace and use that to start genuine conversations. Pay close attention to the speaker for those 10 or 15 minutes that you are engaging that local national. It will result in you gaining the situational understanding and intel that you need to accomplish your mission.

Have specific systems in place for

recording information. Notepads and digital cameras are essential, but other devices such as helmet cameras, vehicle cameras, and simple voice recorders will greatly enhance your recording capabilities. Video is also a great after action review (AAR) tool to use after significant events. Save every video and picture you take in an organized system on a reliable computer. Take the time to name every file with a descriptive, easy-to-understand title.

**Become an expert on your AO.** You have to know the area better than the insurgents. Know every street, alley, building, and all the key players. Key players are not just government officials and local leaders, but also the families that occupy buildings that you consider to be key terrain. Get to know them. Show them you are talking to them because you enjoy it and not just because you must. Those random drop-ins to key players may help with other objectives, such as getting one of your squad leaders to the rooftop to check out the fields of fire or figuring out how to gain entry quietly in the middle of the night for a small kill team (SKT).

Knowing the layout of the streets and buildings will allow you to outmaneuver the enemy in a firefight. Spend time studying the imagery of your AO and identify all of the vehicle and foot routes. Use this information to track how often you use each route and never set a pattern. **Never leave your AO the same way you went in.**

Learn the actual Arabic names of the streets and neighborhoods. The locals and the police won't know what "Route Blue" and "Route Michigan" are. They will relate information and directions with their own street names. Go to the local police station, point at their wall map, and ask the names of each major street. It's too easy. It is 10 minutes of work that will make you much more effective. Put this near the top of your to-do list as soon as you get in your AO. Even learning the English interpretation will suffice if you always have an interpreter, but make the effort to learn the Arabic versions if you have the time.

**Define the enemy.** The violence and destruction that is occurring in your sector is not always the work of one unified insurgent group. Foreign fighters, insurgents, and criminals are a few types of enemy. Foreign fighters are generally hard-





core, religiously-motivated, and highly trained. Foreign fighters are often trained as snipers and bomb makers and will seek out the sanctuary of a mosque for shelter and support. Insurgent groups are mostly composed of local Iraqis and have goals with a political end state. Criminals are just that — local thugs. Iraq is ruled by mafia-type organizations that sometimes form around families, tribes, or neighborhoods and take advantage of the relative lawlessness to make money. Their actions may not be directed at you but will affect your AO significantly. Know who your enemy is and isn't and treat them accordingly.

**Use minimum force.** Basically, try not to break stuff or kill anyone you don't have to. Armored vehicles can destroy a tight neighborhood. In many low-income areas the water lines are buried only inches under the ground, and your heavy vehicles will crush them. Power lines are often hung low and can be ripped down. An inattentive driver can knock down walls and telephone poles and destroy cars. The bottom line is that you are going to alienate all of your would-be sources. If you have to go on foot, just do it. If the neighborhood is that tight, you probably won't be able to maneuver your vehicles in a firefight anyway.

You may also have to cut a lot of padlocks to get into courtyards and buildings. Your S-4 can purchase padlocks locally, and you

can keep replacements in your truck. It's not a perfect solution, but it is better than nothing.

**Focus on gaining intel.** Killing the enemy during a firefight is great, but catching him in a covert ambush before he even knows you are there is so much more satisfying (and safe!). This requires *getting inside the enemy's planning cycle* and *knowing his next move* before he makes it. Yes, this will require a lot of clandestine operations, but there are so many more assets that you can take advantage of to do the work for you. Your S-2 will be able to tell you what signal intelligence assets, interrogation databases, and other sources are available in your area. Use them! You would be amazed at how underutilized many of our most advanced assets are. And when you track these people down and show interest in their program, they will be happy to show you what they have to offer and will support your missions.

A little time spent on the SIPRNET (Secret Internet Protocol Router Network) searching databases can also provide you with a lot of useful information and analysis that others have already done for you. Additionally, there is a lot of grunt detective work to be done in your AO. If you get a lead, follow it. Have that local come with you and point out what he was talking about. Every piece of intel is going to help you better understand the big picture. Some

*Balancing security with civilian interaction is key for units patrolling in Iraq.*

leaders have even purchased cell phones at the local market so that their tactical sources could call them directly, day or night.

If you have an improvised explosive device (IED) cell operating in your area, you need to be targeting the cell, not just developing new tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) to deal with IED encounters. What is their motivation? Who do they target and why? What kind of patterns are they setting? What is the local national sentiment towards them? Where do they live (not always local)? A single SKT may take weeks to plan, but if you have done your homework then your chances of killing or capturing bad guys are much higher. Always update and review your target packets to keep you on track and focused. And as a final note on intel, it is always better to *capture* than *kill*. The intelligence that you will gather from that insurgent is far more valuable than simply eliminating him from the earth.

**Improve the neighborhood.** After you have been in your AO for a while, you will have a good idea of the issues. Pick one that is both realistic and will have a positive, visible impact on the area and work on it as you can. Remember that you are just a platoon, so "building a new grammar school" probably isn't a feasible objective.



Perhaps it could be something as simple as increasing the local police presence in your neighborhood. You can start by building a relationship with the police, then start doing combined patrols, and then finally establish a permanent police presence with patrols and a checkpoint or police station. Of course, this is just an example. Never forget to communicate your intentions and progress reports to the local populace. If you don't know where to start, focus on the essential services such as water, power and sewer. They should be at the top of your list. Request the support assets that are attached to your battalion such as Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations and leverage your S-4 to enlist local contractors.

**Never forget how important your interpreter is in the COIN fight.** Without an interpreter, you would be hard pressed to accomplish much of the above. You must build a relationship with your interpreter. Ensure that your interpreter understands what you expect of him. If you are speaking calmly, he should speak calmly. If you are yelling, your interpreter should be doing the same. He must convey not only the subject matter but the feeling and inflection in your voice. Give them a good initial counseling and make sure they understand their role.

Make your interpreter feel like part of the team. He is probably already getting paid a healthy amount, but make sure that he is getting to meals, going on leave when authorized, getting escorted to the PX when necessary and available, and is being treated well (most 'terps are not!). Give him a set of ACUs to wear and a unit patch. If your interpreter enjoys working with you, he will yield so much more intel than just interpreting words. A local interpreter can read if someone is lying much better than you can; he can tell you the background and affiliations of the local tribes and families; he can help you focus your questioning to relevant topics; he can help control civilians when things get hectic; and he can teach you a lot about local customs and the norms of society.

**Balance security with civilian interaction.** A lot of units never grasp the concept of local national engagement because it puts them in the open and vulnerable to the enemy. There is some truth to this, but there is also an easy solution. Let's say that you want to stop by the local market and talk to the locals. No problem, simply plan it as if you were conducting a raid. Have a planned infil and exfil route. Have an overwatch position. Have the big guns on your vehicles lock down the high speed avenues of approach. And have a time limit. You now have some relative freedom to have a squad with the platoon leader and interpreter walk into the market and gain some intel and build rapport with the locals. Use your interpreter while a few Soldiers buy cigarettes and sodas. To the locals it just looks like you parked your vehicles and jumped out to talk, but you have the whole street locked down. The same actions should be taken when searching a house, stopping by the police station, or enjoying a cup of chai with the local sheik.

**Have tactical patience and avoid emotional responses to an operational event.** Some very unfortunate things are going to happen in a war zone. In an insurgency this is often a baited situation aimed at creating an emotional, overblown response from the counterinsurgent (you) that creates a lot of civilian collateral damage.

If you don't know who to blame and kill or capture, wait until you do. Knee-jerk reactions waste energy, effort, and are in most cases counterproductive to COIN strategy.

**Always have a task and purpose.** Every time you leave the wire you should have a specific task to accomplish. Have a specific plan and route. Once that task is complete, you are done. If you have multiple tasks to accomplish then plan accordingly and do them one after another. DO NOT conduct time-standard patrolling. Many units use this technique and leave platoons out of the wire for as much as eight hours at a time with no plan. As soon as you are wandering around the AO aimlessly with no planned objective or route, you will die. Yes, that sounds extreme and blunt, but it is the truth. If you do not plan your routes, then you will begin to set patterns whether you realize it or not. And then you will get blown up or shot.

**Use and rehearse your SOPs.** Having SOPs will allow you to accomplish your task quickly and safely. One of the most common things you will do is clear and conduct sensitive site exploitation (SSE) on a house. By using an SOP you can enter, clear, and SSE an entire house in 20 minutes. You can hit the target house first and then the houses on either side if you came up with nothing (which happens often). Thus, you can collect vital information on three entire households within an hour, allowing more time for the numerous other tasks that you need to accomplish. And this applies when you go in "soft" as well. Use the same SOP but with a smile on your face and by ringing the doorbell. It takes practice but SOPs such as this will save time and lives. The most important benefits of SOPs are that they alleviate excessive radio traffic and ensure nothing will be overlooked.

That probably sounds pretty simple. Well, it has to be. We are infantrymen, not rocket scientists. If you can work those techniques into your mission planning every day, you will be leaps and bounds ahead of most deployed units. It's not perfect and it's not all-inclusive, but it's something that any platoon can wrap their brains around and execute. The finer tactical points are going to depend on the specific enemy situation in your AO and your own capabilities. Remember that AOs are fluid environments that can change in weeks, days, and even minutes. It is critical that you continuously assess your COIN strategy and its effectiveness in your AO. You can integrate a "COIN leadership huddle" into your company targeting meetings (usually weekly) to facilitate this process.

Embrace counterinsurgency. It is not the cut and dried direct action fight that we all trained for. It is a thinking man's game. You must outsmart your enemy. Do not get discouraged when you do not see immediate results. Some areas will be more resistant than others. This is not a reason to write the AO off as a lost cause. You just have a lot of work to do. Start small, start safe. Changing the dynamic of a neighborhood takes time.


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CPT Craig Coppock has served as both a rifle platoon leader and reconnaissance platoon leader in counterinsurgency operations in Iraq.

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# THE COMBINED ARMS BATTALION AS AN AIR ASSAULT TASK FORCE

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JACK MARR  
MAJOR JOHN CUSHING  
CAPTAIN JOSH POWERS  
CAPTAIN RICH THOMPSON

With proper focus and support, a combined arms battalion (CAB) can become a proficient air assault task force. The 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment (1-15 IN) proved this to be true over the 14 months of continuous combat operations it conducted in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom V as it planned and executed more than 20 air assault missions. Varying from multiple platoon/multiple landing zone (LZ) insertions into several objectives to single platoon daylight raids, these operations effectively disrupted extremist activities across a more than 1,000 square kilometer area of operations (AO).

The results of these operations were tangible — two high value individuals killed or captured, eight caches discovered, 12 enemy killed in action, 69 suspected extremists detained and four extremist safe houses destroyed. Even when the objective area turned out to be a “dry hole,” these air assaults had an important Information Operation (IO) effect by demonstrating the battalion’s capability and resolve to strike at the time and place of its choosing. Most importantly, the vertical approach of the air assault enabled the battalion to achieve this success while avoiding the threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), the potential for tripping the

*Soldiers from B Company, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment run to a UH-60 helicopter to return to their combat outpost November 25, 2007.*

*Specialist Ben Hutto*

enemy’s early warning systems, and maximizing our technological advantages (night vision devices, AH-64 sight systems, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)).

With focused training and the right emphasis from senior leadership, a heavy brigade combat team (HBCT) using combined arms battalions as air assault task forces can add a tremendous tool to its arsenal of methods to defeat extremists; a tool that will save lives, strike fear in the heart of the enemy, and is capable of disrupting enemy operations over a larger-than-normal area.

## **What Made Air Assaults Appealing in the 1-15 IN AO**

The 1-15 IN, the “Can Do” Battalion, fought as part of the 3rd HBCT, 3rd Infantry Division (3rd ID) from April 2007 to May 2008. The battalion was task organized with two infantry companies, one armor company and one engineer company — not nearly enough combat power to control many parts of the entire AO. In order to prevent the development of a wholesale extremist sanctuary, the task force looked for ways to disrupt those hardest to reach parts



of the AO. Additionally, an analysis of the enemy's strengths encouraged a greater focus on leveraging technological advantages and the air assault mission.

Analysis of the more than 1,000 square kilometers assigned as the battalion's area of operations revealed that simply driving to the objective and maintaining the element of surprise might not always be possible. The raised canal roads through the irrigated countryside and the canalization through built-up villages greatly increased the potential for enemy early warning. Further, it became apparent that combat forces were the most vulnerable when traveling to the objective due to the IED threat. The majority of the AO was protected by enemy IED security belts that were so dense (sometimes five or more in a row) that they denied coalition ground passage. The enemy used these security belts for both early warning and terrain denial.

After a few attempts to disrupt the enemy via ground, the air assault option became the most appealing in order to seize an objective quickly, gather key intelligence, and extract our forces. Furthermore, by leveraging the use of UAVs, AH-64s and OH-58s with their state-of-the-art night vision, the battalion quickly found itself able to operate freely at night and further develop the intelligence picture within our AO. These systems allowed us to confirm or deny human intelligence (HUMINT) reporting, develop future air assault missions, and maintain the initiative by continuously applying the pressure on the extremists.

### Planning for and Building the Air Assault Mind-set

The battalion's first experience conducting an air assault occurred during the home station train-up exercise prior to deploying to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California. At that point only a handful of leaders had experience with conducting an air assault in combat. The training exercise was supported by lift assets from the 3rd ID Combat Aviation Brigade, which had numerous pilots with extensive air assault experience but not much as an aviation task force. Therefore, the exercise was approached with fairly meticulous planning and preparation, which closely followed the doctrine of the air assault



Sergeant Timothy Kingston

*A Soldier with the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment provides security as fellow Soldiers pass by to search a house for weapons during an air assault mission February 28, 2008.*

planning process — initial planning conference (IPC), air movement coordination meeting (AMCM), and air mission brief (AMB). This first air assault attempt was a two serial, two lift, two LZ mission onto a MOUT site at Fort Benning, Georgia. Following the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Gold Book through each step of the air assault was instrumental as both staffs gained the experiential and doctrinal knowledge needed to conduct successful air assaults when we deployed to Iraq.

This training event helped us to dispel one of the myths identified in the Gold Book — that an air assault is just the movement by helicopter of an infantry force. The challenges in coordinating air space, fire support, landing zones, and direct fire control — with forces on the ground and in the air — proved to the battalion's leadership that the planning, preparation, and execution of an air assault mission was a truly challenging task. However, as the benefits of conducting an air assault were high, the battalion staff rapidly adapted itself to planning and preparing for this type of mission, building a true "air assault mind-set" at the most critical level.

Once in Iraq, the battalion staff immediately incorporated the option of conducting an air assault into the battalion-level targeting process. In the analysis of many of the battalion's targets, the staff

made mission-recommendations on specific targets to the battalion commander, including the best method for execution. The battalion S3, S3 Air and the S2 conducted an initial mission analysis to determine a tentative timeline, number of aircraft required, number of lifts required, potential pick-up zones (PZs), LZs, and alternate landing zones (ALZs). This planning session also looked at the actions on the objective and drafted an initial plan that the company commander could refine.

While preparing for the operation, the air planner looked to integrate all available intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) assets to maximize eyes on and around the target area, ensuring security and surveillance for ground forces. He ensured that redundant surveillance measures were available before, during, and after the mission. Maximizing ISR hours before the air assault gave the battalion tactical operations center (TOC) and the ground tactical commander the latest information on the objective area. It also provided a venue for the operations and intelligence brief conducted with the aviators during cold load training. During the operation the attack aviation provided both additional eyes and security while the UAV feed gave the battalion TOC the situational awareness it needed to keep brigade informed on the progress of the



operations. Keeping the UAV monitoring the objective after the air assault allowed the battalion to observe the effects of the recently completed air assault.

Prior to publishing the battalion concept of operation (CONOP), the air planner conducted a detailed map reconnaissance, using UAV “real time” feeds and tasked available attack aviation to gain critical information of the objective area and possible LZs. All of this information was packaged into the CONOP and sent to the supporting aviation units, which began basic planning; the brigade headquarters, which began allocating additional combat multipliers; and the company commander, who would be the ground tactical commander for execution.

The AMCM was conducted approximately 48 hours prior to mission execution. The brigade S3 hosted the meeting which involved the lift and attack aviation assets, the battalion S3 of the unit conducting the air assault, the ground tactical commander, and the brigade aviation element. This meeting gave the participants a chance to ask questions clarifying the CONOP so all elements could continue the planning process. The AMB was conducted approximately 24 hours after the AMCM and briefed by the battalion commander to the brigade commander. All of the same elements were represented; however, each element had an opportunity to refine their portion of the plan. Once AMB was complete, all elements were prepared to execute the mission.

## The Challenges

**LZ selection** — One of the single-most critical portions of air assault planning is the selection of the best landing zone(s) possible. Early on, this selection was made by map (imagery) reconnaissance almost exclusively. However, by trial and error, both 1-15 IN and the supporting aviation battalions found that this was not the best method. By leveraging different ISR platforms, the battalion’s staff was better able to select the right place to land to facilitate a rapid assembly and transition to the ground tactical plan.

Prior to the AMCM, the planner used available assets to continue detailed reconnaissance, and attempted to answer requests for information (RFIs) from the company commander who would be conducting the mission. The LZ plan should include at least one primary and one alternate LZ, and an emergency LZ easily accessible from the objective in case medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) is needed. When selecting these LZs, there were several specific problems that seemed to continually present themselves in Iraq. The majority of suitable LZs were farmers’ fields adjacent to objective houses or villages. These fields proved to be challenging, especially when forces were not prepared for what they encountered. Well-irrigated fields usually consisted of terrain that was hard to maneuver on foot and to land helicopters, while dry fields posed the threat of brown out conditions to aviators and the assault force. Fields intended for farming were almost always surrounded by irrigation canals, some of which were literally impassible for ground troops. Other risks included power lines or small structures near the objective buildings. The 1-15 IN reduced these risks by conducting a detailed map, UAV, and helicopter reconnaissance to preselect the best possible LZ for the objective.

A UAV provided the opportunity to conduct reconnaissance of the objective with little detection by enemy forces. The UAV was

also a beneficial tool because it provided the planner the ability to watch the target area through a Rover feed and shift focus to areas of interest or possible threats to air and ground forces. The only downside to UAV reconnaissance was that some platforms were loud and easily detected from the ground. Sustained coverage in a previously quiet area could lead to enemy personnel becoming suspicious or weary of pending coalition missions. To mitigate this early warning, 1-15 IN was successful in “desensitizing” an area days or weeks prior to an operation by flying UAV and attack aviation around and over the area at arbitrary times. Desensitization can be achieved by having attack aviation conduct low hovers above fields surrounding the target area. These fields should be selected at varying distances from the target area, and desensitization should be conducted at varying times throughout the night. Though UAVs were helpful to initially identify LZs, the pictures they produced were usually not clear enough to determine all threats or hazards in the area. Once the LZs were selected, OH-58s were used to provide extremely detailed digital pictures of an LZ that were clear enough to identify any hazards or danger areas. They were also used to pinpoint infiltration routes on to the target from the LZ.

**Learning organization** — As with any successful organization, 1-15 IN used after action reviews (AARs) to continually improve its performance and streamline the planning and execution of follow-on missions. Additionally, the battalion leadership continually sought feedback and lessons learned from other units performing air assault missions throughout the Iraq theater of operations.

The first air assault operation conducted by 1-15 IN occurred on June 5, 2007, nearly three months into the deployment. Operation Casablanca was a company air assault designed to kill and or capture extremists setting the conditions for a future battalion mission in a heavily contested area. This mission was a two serial, two lift, two LZ mission conducted with the same company that executed the training mission at Fort Benning. The operation was a success and all of the hard work and training paid off as the battalion was able to truly realize the advantages of conducting air assaults in combat.

With continued experience in conducting air assault missions, the battalion gradually increased the complexity as we gained more confidence. By the eighth air assault, the battalion was able to conduct an assault on two different objectives. Using three CH-47s, the assault force initially landed at one objective and subsequently cleared three suspected al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) safe houses. Once the area was thoroughly searched and the detainees secured, the CH-47s returned, landing at a second objective — yet another suspected AQI safe house. The mission was a success, confirming the location of multiple AQI safe houses.

Early successes in conducting air assaults did not preclude us from learning from other organizations. Every morning, the 1-15 IN battle captain listened to the division commander’s update on the Command Post of the Future (CPOF). Through this process, the battalion’s leadership gained valuable tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) from other units across all lines of operation. A couple of key lessons learned pertaining to air assault operations were the use of the tactical callouts and offset LZs.

During a tactical callout, the ground assault force maneuvered to a position to establish the outer cordon of the target house.



Once this outer cordon was set, the unit would delay entering and clearing the building and use their interpreters to “call out” the occupants (using a bull horn) and give them a chance to identify themselves. This method reduced the threat of suicide attacks and house-born IEDs. Additionally, the employment of call outs reduced collateral damage to structures on or near the objective which influenced the occupants’ willingness to provide useful information.

As a result of other unit’s successes, 1-15 IN began to experiment with the proximity of the landing zones to the objective area. During the initial air assaults, the landing zones selected were as close to the target house as possible. In many cases, potentially targeted individuals were able to escape from the objective before it was effectively cordoned off (these individuals were termed “squirters”). In order to prevent this from happening, 1-15 IN began planning air assaults where the LZ was 1,000 (or more) meters away from the actual objective — an offset LZ. Direct infils were most effective when the objective was either a fixed target (such as a cache site or a suspected enemy safe house) or an isolated objective where enemy personnel can not easily move from one structure to another. By contrast, using an offset LZ was successful when the objective was part of a built-up village. For example, during Operation Varsity March on October 25, 2007, the ground assault force infiltrated approximately two kilometers from the objective area, where the helicopter

rotors could be heard but not necessarily tip off personnel on the objective. Once the force was inserted, they conducted a tactical movement to the objective, avoiding areas where they could be detected such as houses or built-up canal roads.

**Time-sensitive missions** — After gaining experience through several air assaults, 1-15 IN was able to execute several hastily planned air assault missions to take advantage of information on time sensitive targets (TSTs). In order to maximize the exploitation of TST information, serious modifications to the air assault planning sequence were necessary; many were planned and executed in under six hours.

To expedite the planning process, 1-15 IN assembled the entire air assault task force at one location, often landing both lift and attack helicopters at one of the combat outposts. Then, with all pilots and key ground force leaders in one place, intelligence was reviewed, LZs selected, command and control (C2) information exchanged, and contingencies were talked through. Based on previous missions, this team was able to leverage pre-existing execution and conditions checklists.

Over time, these types of missions became battle drills for the companies as well as the battalion staff. The most pertinent tools needed for these types of missions could be established in advance, maximizing time for flexibility when the TST mission was received. Critical to these missions was the conditions check to identify minimum requirements needed to

execute such a mission. Though TST operations are always a race against the clock, units can ensure success by continually rehearsing contingency planning, including basic air assault tasks.

### **Combined Arms Battalion Air Assault TTPs**

**Use of the battalion tactical command post (TAC)** — On all battalion-level air assault operations (two or more companies) and the larger, more complex, company-level air assaults, it was important to have a battalion TAC element operating on the ground along with maneuver forces. The battalion TAC provides a command and control element that allowed the company commander to “fight lower,” while the TAC “fought higher.” TAC composition was mission dependent, but usually consisted of the following personnel: the battalion commander and battalion command sergeant major (CSM), the battalion S-3 Air, a battalion radio-telephone operator (RTO), the battalion fire support officer, and the battalion physician’s assistant. If seats were available, additional personnel were added to aid the ground mission, to include S-2 analysts, additional medics, and command security personnel.

During the operation the battalion commander and battalion CSM were on the ground to gain full situational understanding of the operation as it developed, and were present to make timely decisions. The S-3 Air’s primary responsibility was to coordinate with aviation elements (both lift and attack) to ensure that they received accurate situation reports from the ground, that attack aviation support was constantly maintained, and that lift aviation was aware of any changes to the timeline or PZ location. The S-3 Air also relayed updates from the company commander to the battalion TOC. The battalion RTO was responsible for maintaining constant communication with the battalion TOC, often using tactical satellite (TACSAT) and high frequency radios. Additionally, the battalion RTO received UAV and close air support updates from the battalion TOC, which could then be passed off to attack aviation for immediate exploitation. The battalion FSO maintained redundant communication with the battalion through the fires net, and controlled all fires requested by the company



Sergeant Timothy Kingston

*Soldiers from B Company, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment load onto a UH-60 helicopter during an air assault mission February 28.*





Captain Simon McKensie

*Lieutenant Colonel Jack Marr shows U.S. Marine Corps Major General Mastin Robeson, Major General Rick Lynch and Colonel Wayne Grigsby a DRAGON-V.*

commander. The FSO and the S-3 Air deconflicted air in the vicinity of the objective prior to initiating fires.

During battalion-level air assault operations, the maneuver element often received numerous attachments, including Combat Camera, press, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams, K-9 teams, Psychological Operations (PSYOP) teams, and HUMINT collectors. Though these elements were important to the ground tactical plan, the company commander could become overwhelmed by the number of attachments on the objective. The battalion TAC relieved this pressure by consolidating attachments and assuming the responsibility for their accountability. The company could call forward these elements as dictated by the situation, but the TAC provided overwatch of the attachments out of the way of maneuver forces, allowing the company commander to focus on maneuvering the ground forces.

To assist with command and control, TF 1-15 IN built the Deployable Radio Air Ground Operational Network Vehicle (DRAGON-V). This was a Gator vehicle that was modified to assist in command and control. The DRAGON-V has a mounted One-Station Remote Viewer Terminal (OSRVT) to assist with watching the UAV feeds, a blue force tracker (BFT) to monitor the unit's locations as well as a contingency for communications, two Advanced Systems Improvement Program (ASIP) radios as the primary method of communications, a TACSAT radio for long distance communications, and a generator. The DRAGON-V negated the C2 disadvantages of being "on the ground," by bringing all of the amenities of a battalion TOC and all the technological advantages our Army could provide.

**Leveraging hidden talent** — Most combined arms battalions have Soldiers with an array of hidden talents due to experiences from previous assignments. The elimination of the 11M military occupational specialty has led to infantrymen — at all ranks — to serve across our Army, gaining valuable experiences and bringing

it to other units. It is imperative that the leadership of the battalion seek out their air assault-specific hidden talent and discuss previous deployment experiences. Fortunately, 1-15 IN had two company commanders and the battalion commander who had served in the 82nd Airborne Division and another company commander who had served in one of the Ranger battalions. Additionally, several of the platoon sergeants, quite a few squad leaders, and even some of the riflemen had served previous tours in Iraq and Afghanistan with the 101st Airborne Division, the 82nd Airborne Division, and the 10th Mountain Division, as well as the Ranger Regiment. This meant that key individuals throughout the formation had conducted numerous air assaults and knew how these types of operations enabled combat forces to extend their tactical reach.

**Isolating the objective** — One of the main issues that a staff must account for when planning an air assault is isolation of the objective. Through experience, 1-15 IN developed several TTPs that were proven effective in managing "squirt control."

On almost every one of the battalion's air assault missions, 1-15 IN observed the enemy TTP of "squirting" off of the objective, often into wooded areas or nearby residential areas. Usually, the enemy was smart enough not to carry weapons, thereby complicating the unit's ability to engage them immediately. By the time ground forces had landed and were prepared to assault the objective, the enemy personnel usually had enough time to evade, and ISR assets had trouble tracking these personnel when they were moving under the concealment of trees or houses. Even when ISR was able to follow the squirts, it was often difficult to maneuver an element over land to intercept them.

Isolation fires were proven to be an effective means of restricting enemy freedom of maneuver. Isolation fires were most effective when ground forces would infil onto a direct LZ that provided them the ability to quickly assault the objective, and when employed at H-0:05 or H-0:06. These isolation fires confused and overwhelmed personnel on the objective as the first sounds of rotor blades could be detected. By the time personnel on the objective regained their senses, the assault force had already been able to occupy assault positions and were prepared to initiate the raid. The only downside to this TTP was the proximity of lift assets to the objective as well as the isolation fires being conducted. This risk was mitigated by conducting rehearsals, prior coordination utilizing phase lines, and good cross talk to ensure solid airspace deconfliction.

The 1-15 IN was also successful in controlling squirts by having a chalk or two dedicated to hastily infil into LZs in the areas that squirts had moved to. This technique was hard to plan for because of all the contingencies involved, but the most effective technique was to have the UH-60s return following the final lift onto the objective and loiter in a pre-established air checkpoint. Attack aviation was essential throughout this insertion to identify the location of squirts and identify LZs for lift elements to use. Once UH-60s were clear, attack aviation also provided isolation fires to deny the enemy's ability to flee from ground forces.

**PZ control operations** — Pick-up zone control and manifesting



is an essential process in the conduct of an air assault operation. The battalion S-1, along with a small detail, was tasked with controlling and facilitating this process. An early lesson learned was integration of the PZ control element into the rehearsal process.

The manifest process begins days prior to the mission as the unit prepared an initial manifest based off of the type and number of aircraft, the number of LZs, and the placement of key personnel to allow efficient command and control on the ground. On the day of the rehearsal, the 1-15 IN S-1 confirmed the complete manifest and participated in the rehearsal. The S-1 ensured that Soldiers' information was properly annotated on the manifest. Once the battalion S-1 confirmed that all Soldiers were on the manifest, a copy of the manifest was given to all chalk leaders for the mission.

Approximately one hour prior to the lift off time of the aircraft, the battalion S-1, along with a small detail assumed PZ control responsibilities and would mark the locations where each lift and chalk would conduct their final manifest. During night air assault operations, a chem light marking system was typically used. As the Soldiers for the air assault arrived and lined up in their chalks, the S-1 and the PZ control detail verified the final manifest to ensure that all Soldiers were present and in their correct chalks. The chalk leaders then met with the battalion S-1 to once again verify that there were no discrepancies within the manifest. Upon the arrival of the aircraft, the PZ control detail would then guide each chalk to its aircraft, counting them on as they loaded (this step doesn't have to be done at the aircraft door; it can be done from a distance). Once all Soldiers had boarded the aircraft, the detail reported to the battalion S-1 the total number of personnel on each aircraft. The 1-15 IN S-1 would then report the number of personnel that loaded the aircraft and the time of their departure, to the TOC.

Once the mission was complete and the aircraft returned to the combat outpost, the PZ control detail led the Soldiers off of the aircraft and passed them through a choke point. The battalion S-1 posted himself at this choke point and personally placed hands on each Soldier as they left the LZ to ensure proper accountability for all the returning Soldiers. The battalion S-1 would

also receive an "up" from each chalk leader for accountability of personnel and equipment. The 1-15 IN S-1 would then report 100-percent accountability of all personnel and equipment to the TOC.

**Working with attachments** — There are more and more "enablers" that commanders have to use to mitigate enemy TTPs, such as military working dogs, human collection teams, tactical PSYOPS teams (TPTs), and EOD teams. These assets must be used in a synchronized step-by-step fashion. It is necessary for not only commanders but also the lower level elements such as squads, to rehearse the plan (with these assets) to synchronize the actions on the object as well as get all elements familiar with having extra attachments on the battlefield. When organized and rehearsed, the assault force — with these additional assets — combined for a lethal and risk-mitigated operation.

**The Importance of rehearsals** — Rehearsals were essential for all 1-15 IN operations; however, for a unit that was not experienced in air assault operations, they were absolutely critical. Every aspect of the operation was rehearsed: from static load or cold load training to infiltration and actions on the objective. Soldiers getting off an aircraft at night are similar to those getting out of the back of a Bradley fighting vehicle in that it will take time to get oriented on the ground. Detailed rehearsals and identifying landmarks to look for once on the ground will help to alleviate this period of orientation.

Rehearsing the exfiltration was equally important. This may be one of the most complex actions since the air assault force must consolidate and reorganize on the objective and ensure accountability of all men, weapons, and equipment while moving into PZ posture. When rehearsed each Soldier knew exactly where he was supposed to go when the "prep for exfil" command was given. The 1-15 IN ensured that the ground element was not exposed in PZ posture (waiting for AC) for more than five minutes.

As a general rule, 1-15 IN companies rehearsed every operation at a minimum of three times (not including platoon and squad rehearsals) during the planning cycle. We rehearsed to the point that it was painfully tedious. The one constant AAR comment from all leaders in the company was that as painful and tedious that the

rehearsals were, they paid off and were glad they were executed, "things went smoothly because of rehearsals."

## Conclusion

As the Army draws down in Iraq, building the air assault capability becomes more important because it allows a battalion to have an effect over a larger area. TF 1-15, a combined arms battalion, whose usual method of transportation is by Bradleys and tanks, conducted 23 air assault operations. The "Can Do" Battalion refined its TTPs every mission and treated each operation as the battalion's focus. Conducting air assault missions gave the battalion the ability to disrupt the enemy in areas that were not accessible by ground. More than 300 Soldiers in TF 1-15 IN participated in at least one air assault mission. Among these 300 Soldiers were tankers, artillerymen, and intelligence analysts. As these Soldiers join new units and prepare to deploy, they bring with them knowledge of yet another method of defeating the enemy.

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# CHESS AND POKER:

## *Intelligence Drives Operations*

CAPTAIN BRANDON ANDERSON

### **From Rogers' Rangers Standing Orders:**

11. Don't ever march home the same way. Take a different route so you won't be ambushed.

16. Don't cross a river by a regular ford.

17. If somebody's trailing you, make a circle, come back onto your own tracks, and ambush the folks that aim to ambush you.

*It as if we have been playing chess and the enemy has been playing poker.*

— Sir Robert Thompson

Intelligence drives operations. In a counterinsurgency, insurgents attack coalition forces based on their patterns of activity. Coalition forces attack insurgents based on intelligence on their location. Without establishing a targetable pattern that allows insurgents to emplace an effective ambush, counterinsurgents are not easily targeted. Without effective intelligence on the location of insurgents, the superior firepower and numbers of counterinsurgents are meaningless. The challenge across Iraq and Afghanistan on the tactical level is one where coalition forces work to vary their patterns to avoid being attacked while gaining intelligence on the location of insurgents in order to take the initiative and target them.

Everywhere Soldiers go in this operational environment, they must assume they are being watched. It is a difficult and frustrating thing. The counterinsurgent carries arms openly and tries to establish order, while the insurgent hides in the shadows and needs only create chaos. It is infinitely easier to break a window than it is to make one. It is much easier to create chaos than order. The purpose of this article is to discuss successful techniques to frustrate enemy attempts to attack counterinsurgents while gathering information on insurgent locations and activities in order to take the fight to him.

### **Patterning, Targeting, Ambushing**

Major Robert Rogers' Standing Orders for avoiding ambush are as relevant today as they were in 1759. The vast majority of casualties in a counterinsurgency are not taken on the objective. With few exceptions, most Soldiers are wounded or killed getting to or from the objective. The enemy's most effective tactic is not holding strongpoints, hilltops, or bridgeheads; in Iraq and Afghanistan he is most effective in the attrition of coalition forces in ambushes. Whether they are in the form of small arms fire, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), improvised explosive devices (IEDs), vehicle-

borne or person-borne IEDs, or any combination; the common denominator for these attacks is that the enemy must set up his attack in a location where it is reasonable to expect coalition forces to come. This is especially true in urban terrain, where enemy forces cannot leave dumb weapons such as mines unattended and get the effect they desire, to undermine public support for the counterinsurgent and the government he supports. The enemy has to be there to pull the trigger or push the button. To attack you, he has to anticipate where you will be and when you will be there.

The ambushes that are set for coalition forces in Afghanistan and Iraq are based on the observations and analysis done by insurgent forces to find the best time, place, and manner for them to attack. The argument is sometimes made that insurgents have no doctrine and therefore cannot be predicted. Doctrine is a set of principles extracted from experience that allows those who fight to do so more effectively. Insurgents are continuously adapting or dying. All of the dumb ones are dead. This leaves behind a cadre of hardened fighters who know how to survive, whether they realize it or not. If what they were doing was not effective, they would not be able to do it anymore. Books like *The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War* by Ali Ahmad Jalili and Lester W. Grau, document consistently used enemy tactics that were and are effective. After all, doctrine is nothing more than principles derived from successful operations. For this reason there are certain constants. The enemy will not waste his time waiting to ambush coalition forces in an area they are not likely to come through, and generally he will not fight in a location where there is no chance of escape. He will go to a location where there has been a consistent amount of coalition activity, a good likelihood of having coalition forces to attack, and a reasonable chance of escaping to anonymity. To do this, he only needs to watch and analyze the patterns created by coalition forces, where they go and at what times. The most frequently used route, most likely avenue of approach for coalition forces is where the insurgent is most likely to attack. For this reason patrol leaders must have situational awareness of where and when coalition forces have recently gone in their area of operations. Insurgents will attack only at a time and place where they are likely to find coalition forces. That is why alternate routes and the honesty trace system are useful tools.

### **Alternate Routes and the Honesty Trace System**

One of the critical tasks that commanders must accomplish when they come into a new area of operations is to reconnoiter all possible routes to and from important places in their area of operations. Identifying several avenues of approach for mounted and dismounted movements gives patrol leaders several options for



getting from the base to the objective without getting ambushed. Given the hectic pace of operations and challenges inherent in navigating some of the urban sprawl in Southwest Asia, it is imperative that leaders identify and enforce the use of alternate routes to prevent their patrols from being easily patterned, targeted and ambushed. Patrol leaders must become comfortable with the several routes they can choose from in the area of operations as soon as possible. It is not enough to use the easiest route or the shortest route, because that is the route where the ambush is likely waiting.

The next step in maximizing variety and situational awareness is use of the honesty trace board. This technique was developed by the British Army during the troubles in Northern Ireland and discovered by the author when he was working with Task Force Helmand in Afghanistan. When patrol leaders return from missions, they go to the honesty trace map and draw where they went with the date/time group on the honesty trace board, which is acetate placed over a satellite image of the area of operations. If every patrol leader in the area draws where and when he went in the AO on the honesty trace board, the full picture of when and how the enemy is most likely to attack becomes clear. The honesty trace board allows the patrol leader to share when and where he went on patrol as well as to know where others have gone, to avoid establishing a targetable pattern. For example: SSG Johnson returns from using Route Red as his infil and Route Green as his exfil after his mission to District Headquarters, with an infil time of 19 0500 January and an exfil time of 19 1900 January. When LT Jones goes out on patrol the next day, he will be able to check the honesty trace board to see who has been where, and based on CF activity take a different route such as Route Blue, Maroon, or Orange. Based on the times and routes previously used, as well as recent significant activities, patrol leaders will be able to make a more informed choice of how to get where they need to go without exposing themselves to more danger than they have to. (If you would like to see an example honesty trace board, send an e-mail to [BENN.CATD.Inf.MagazineDep@conus.army.mil](mailto:BENN.CATD.Inf.MagazineDep@conus.army.mil).)

**While frustrating enemy attempts at ambushing coalition forces may save lives, it alone will not win the war. Only effectively targeting insurgent forces, transitioning to locally-supported indigenous security forces, and gaining local support for the government can do that.**

Insurgents do not have the time and resources to ambush six or seven routes, or continuously observe six or seven routes. At best, they want coalition forces to take the same route on and off of the objective so that they have the time to set an easy ambush. Setting an ambush on the one road coalition forces use is not hard. However, setting seven ambushes in seven different locations with the hope that one will have contact with a patrol is something that most insurgent groups do not have the time, resources, or discipline to do.

Commanders must make an assessment based on the terrain and enemy capabilities on whether it is safe to drive on certain routes, and this assessment is likely to change throughout the deployment. If the threat is particularly high for explosively formed penetrators (EFPs) versus mines, paved roads may or may not be the best

option. However, when applied based on the threat situation the principle of varying routes and times is a sound and effective one.

Identifying several routes and using the honesty trace system is an effective technique, but it will only buy time. While frustrating enemy attempts at ambushing coalition forces may save lives, it alone will not win the war. Only effectively targeting insurgent forces, transitioning to locally-supported indigenous security forces, and gaining local support for the government can do that.

*"It is their war, and they have to win it."*  
— President Kennedy regarding Vietnam

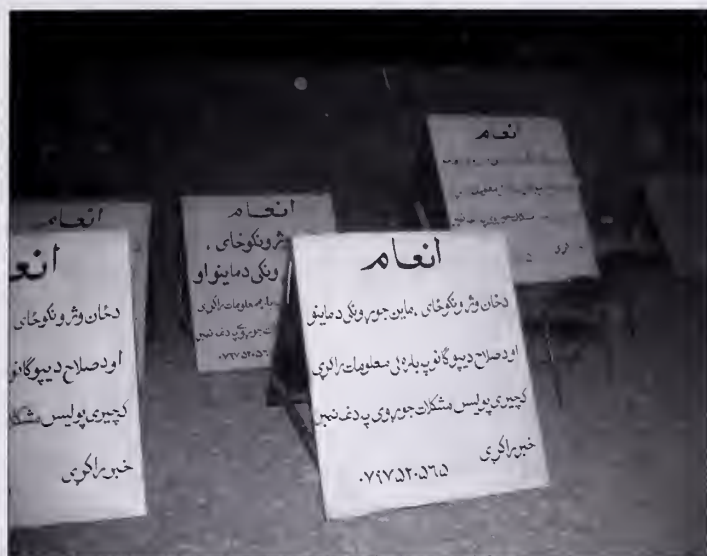
On the opposite side of the poker table, counterinsurgents are trying to find and destroy insurgents, or better yet make them irrelevant by undermining their cause. The modern table of organization and equipment (MTOE) for a rifle company does not come complete with an intelligence shop. However, there are effective adaptations that commanders can implement to gather information and vet it into intelligence at their level. FM 3-24 recommends creating an intel shop at the company level to keep track of all of the information for operations at the company level. This is an excellent technique, but the largest gap that needs to



Courtesy photos

*Transitioning to locally-supported indigenous security forces will help defeat the insurgency.*





*These and other signs were placed in the town bazaar and other key locations in the town. They encourage Iraqis to report police abuses, suicide bombers, and Taliban activities for a \$500 reward.*

be bridged is how to find the insurgents. The answer lies in gaining the support of the local population. If all of the insurgents in Afghanistan and Iraq were to make their identities and whereabouts clear, it would be a simple matter for the superior firepower of our military to close with and destroy them. This is because the greatest weapon and greatest advantage of an insurgent is his anonymity. The critical discipline in counterinsurgency, the missing link as it were, comes down to human intelligence. There simply can be no initiative in counterinsurgency without intelligence, and the best intelligence in this kind of war comes from people. This is underscored by the fact that the very nature of the enemy in this type of war is to cling to anonymity and hide in complex terrain, be it urban or rural, where they are indistinguishable from peaceful citizens. The best resource for finding out who is an insurgent and who is a farmer or shopkeeper are the farmers and shopkeepers themselves; people who have lived in the area and know it best. However, the people will not be willing or able to give information on insurgent activities to security forces without proper motivation and a reasonable expectation of safety.

Even if local nationals want to give information to coalition and government forces, there is a very real fear of reprisal. The challenge for leaders at the company level and below becomes finding opportunities for locals to give information to them without setting their informants up for reprisal. When I was deployed east of Ramadi, Iraq, whole families were killed in reprisal for giving information on insurgent activity. In Gereshk, Afghanistan, a night letter from November 2007 clearly stated that Afghans who dared to expose the location of suicide bombers and other insurgents would be decapitated. Some of the effective techniques that the British and American Armies have developed to counter this are Operation Neighbors or courtesy weapons inspections. Both are excellent techniques for engaging local people through indigenous forces to gather

information. Operation Neighbor consists of conducting joint patrols to engage locals and give them the opportunity to pass intelligence. Courtesy weapons inspections are much the same. Ideally, the courtesy weapons inspection patrol will be led by indigenous forces, police or army, to courteously check the home for illegal weapons or materials while speaking with the head of household. These patrols are conducted with the intent of giving people in the area who want to support the government an opportunity to pass information on insurgent activity. These patrols are effectively reconnaissance patrols with the purpose of gaining public support in order to locate insurgents, the most difficult task for those engaged in a counterinsurgency.

Another effective technique for leaders at the company level is to establish a local information line. In Gereshk, signs were made with field ordering officer (FOO) money and placed in the bazaar and other key areas. The signs announced a reward for information on suicide bombers and Taliban activity on one side, and to use the hotline to report police abuses on the other. A local cellular phone number was painted on the signs and the phone was controlled by U.S. forces or a category II interpreter. The Police Information Line in Gereshk was established to allow locals to pass information to coalition forces without fear of reprisal. Once this information was vetted and turned into intelligence, it allowed coalition forces to investigate allegations of police misconduct and gather information on enemy forces.

Intelligence drives operations. The greatest strength of the insurgent is his anonymity through the active or passive support of the people. If that is stripped away, he becomes a fugitive. The greatest weakness of coalition forces is their vulnerability to enemy ambushes as they go about securing the population, gathering intelligence, and taking the fight to the enemy. The use of alternate routes and the honesty trace system is an excellent technique to frustrate insurgent attempts to pattern, target, and ambush coalition forces. Methods to maximize interaction with local people such as Operation Neighbors, courtesy weapons inspections, and the Police Information Line allow coalition forces to have a more effective link with the population whose support they must gain in order to defeat the insurgency. On a long enough time line, the COIN effort must be won by the people, police, and army of the country where the insurgency is taking place. Only by working through indigenous forces to gain the support of the people can coalition forces effectively set the conditions for the defeat of the insurgency. Until that time, coalition and government forces must fight as shrewdly as possible to ambush the enemy before he ambushes them.

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# REVISITING *MODERN WARFARE*

## THE 3RD HBCT, 3RD ID'S EXPERIENCE IN MADA'IN QADA, IRAQ

LIEUTENANT COLONEL DAVID G. FIVECOAT  
CAPTAIN AARON T. SCHWENGLER

Nearly half a century ago, French Army Colonel Roger Trinquier wrote *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counter-insurgency*. Intent on capturing what really works in a counterinsurgency, Trinquier drew on the vast experience he had amassed as one of Jean Larteguy's centurions — the hard-bitten French regulars who served as the backbone of the French Army during the tough post-World War II counterinsurgency campaigns in China, French Indochina, and Algeria. *Modern Warfare* became a best seller in France and was translated into English in 1964, complete with an excellent forward by Bernard Fall, the renowned journalist-historian.

In his book, Trinquier defined modern warfare as “an interlocking system of actions — political, economic, psychological, and military — that aims at the overthrow of the established authority in a country and a replacement by another regime.” Fittingly, Trinquier's easily read, practical guide to executing counterinsurgency operations has appeared on a variety of reading lists since the United States' entry into modern warfare in Afghanistan and Iraq. However, since 2004, no author has examined Trinquier's theories to see if they remain applicable on the Iraqi battlefield.

During the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team (3rd HBCT), 3rd Infantry Division's (3rd ID) 14 months of combat in the Mada'in Qada, Iraq, the brigade faced many of the same challenges as Trinquier and his French counterparts did in French Indochina and Algeria. The brigade also implemented key tenets of Trinquier's *modern warfare* — control of the population, destruction of the guerrilla forces, and eradication of the guerrillas' influence on the population — and achieved a significant reduction in violence, the initial stages of reconciliation, and an increase in the capabilities of both the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and the qada government. Based on the 3rd HBCT's experience, many of Trinquier's theories remain as relevant to the 21st century counterinsurgent as they did to his 20th century predecessors.

### Background

The 3rd HBCT, also known as the Sledgehammer Brigade, deployed to Iraq in March 2007 as the third of five so-called surge brigades. It is a transformed brigade consisting of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment (1-15 IN); 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor (2-69 AR); 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment (3-1 CAV); 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment (1-10 FA); 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion (3-3 BSTB); and 203rd Brigade Support Battalion (BSB). However, during the deployment, 2-69 AR was detached to Multi-National Division-Baghdad and fought in the streets of eastern Baghdad.

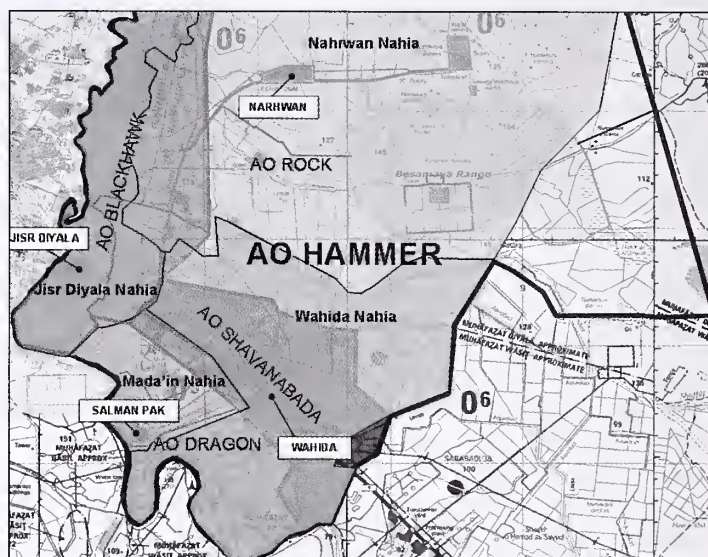


Figure 1 — 3rd HBCT, 3rd ID's AO with Nahia, Battalion Boundaries and Major Population Centers

From March 2007 to May 2008, the 3rd HBCT controlled the Mada'in Qada, the southeastern portion of Baghdad province. A qada is a subordinate government structure in an Iraqi province. The Baghdad province has six qadas and nine security districts. Bounded by the Diyala River on the west and the Tigris River on the south, the Mada'in Qada comprised more than 2,500 square kilometers of mostly irrigated farmland and almost 1.2 million Iraqis. A nahia is a subordinate government structure in a qada. The Mada'in Qada has four nahias: Narhwan, Jisr Diyala, Wahida and Salman Pak. An ethnic fault line ran through the Qada with more than 840,000 Shia living in the Narhwan, Jisr Diyala, and Wahida Nahias and 360,000 Sunni citizens clustered around the Salman Pak enclave. During 2006 and early 2007, ethnic cleansing occurred along the boundary between the sects — resulting in a 2006 average of 53 murders per month in the qada. Key terrain included two bridges into Baghdad, the Baghdad-Al Kut Highway, the former Tuwaitha Nuclear Research Facility, and the Arch of Ctesiphon in Salman Pak.

Upon arrival in Iraq, the Sledgehammer Brigade focused on securing the population. Approximately 2,500 Soldiers served as part of the brigade combat team, with over 40 percent deployed in and amongst the population. The brigade constructed and operated from Forward Operating Base (FOB) Hammer; Combat Outposts (COPs) Cahill, Carver, Cashe, Cleary, and Salie; and Patrol Base Assassin. On the ground, 1-15 IN operated in Salman Pak, 3-1 CAV



controlled Jisr Diyala, and 1-10 FA patrolled Wahida. In February 2008, the 13th Georgian Light Infantry Battalion (13th GG IN BN) joined the Hammer team and occupied Wahida. In addition to 3rd HBCT, more than 900 Iraqi Police, 500 members of the Wassit Emergency Response Unit, and more than 2,000 National Policemen helped to control the qada. Collectively, the Iraqi Security Forces manned 129 checkpoints.

Just as Colonel Trinquier experienced in French Indochina and Algeria, 3rd HBCT fought “armed elements acting clandestinely within a population manipulated by a special organization.” Due to the presence of two ethnic groups in the qada, the brigade fought two insurgencies — a Shia insurgency centered on the Jaysh Al Mahdi (JAM) political organization and the JAM Special Groups (or direct action cells) and a Sunni insurgency composed of members of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).

The Shia insurgency attempted to control the population in the Jisr Diyala, Narhwan, and Wahida Nahias through the domination of the Iraqi Police, tacit control of the nahia governments, and management of the health care clinics. In addition, the Shia insurgency solicited donations at the mosques and from local businesses to fund their operations. Tactically, the Shia insurgency defended its areas from sectarian attacks; attrited coalition forces with improvised explosive devices (IEDs), explosively formed penetrators (EFPs), and rocket attacks; and disrupted coalition operations with small arms fire. The Shia Special Groups, or direct action cells, in the 3rd HBCT area of operations consisted of more than 10 groups in and around Jisr Diyala, Narhwan, and Wahida that attacked coalition forces with 107mm rockets and EFP IEDs. In the summer of 2007, several 107mm rocket cells operated in the northern and western parts of the qada and attacked FOB Rustamiyah, FOB Hammer, and PB Assassin with deadly accuracy. Throughout the time in the qada, there were several EFP cells that conducted more than a score of attacks against 3rd HBCT forces along major routes. The 3-1 CAV, 1-10 FA, and the 13th (GG) IN BN primarily conducted operations against the Shia insurgency.

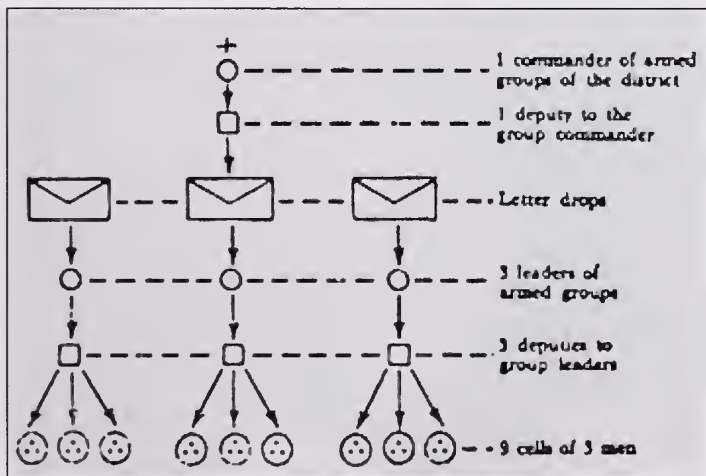
Interestingly, the Shia insurgency organized itself in brigades, battalions, companies, and platoons. Although each of the formations was smaller than its American counterpart, the 3rd HBCT S-2 shop developed an order of battle chart that helped track the enemy's composition. Their organization mirrored a military

structure and replicated the configuration Trinquier fought in Algeria in the late 1950s (See Figure 2). The order of battle chart proved to be a valuable tool as the brigade attempted to neutralize the insurgency in the qada.

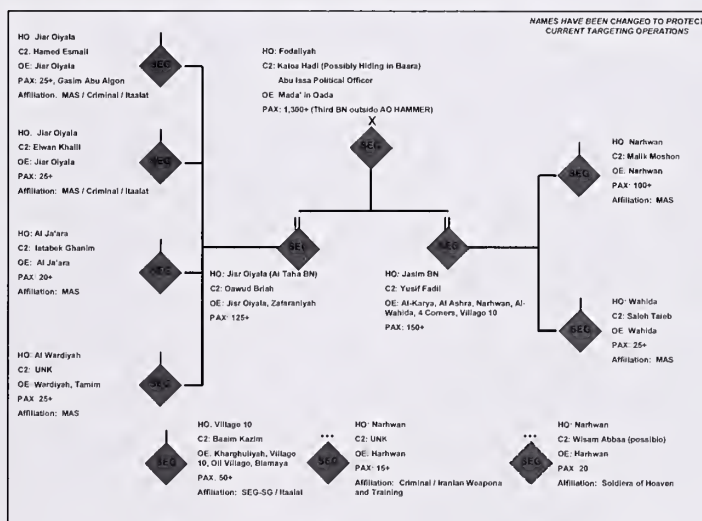
The Sunni insurgency 3rd HBCT fought was an AQI umbrella organization. It consisted of several IED cells, two vehicle-borne IED (VBIED) cells, a suicide vest (SVEST) cell, multiple extra-judicial killing (EJK) cells, a foreign fighter facilitator network, a command and control infrastructure, and a logistics group that provided safe houses, vehicles, and moved fighters. Working out of the numerous villages around Salman Pak, AQI attempted to control the nahia's population; defend the Sunni areas against sectarian aggression; attrit coalition forces with IEDs, mortar attacks, and small arms fire; and disrupt National Police and Iraqi Police operations with IEDs and sniping. During 2007 and 2008, AQI conducted seven VBIED attacks and seven SVEST attacks across the qada. One attack occurred on May 11, 2007, when the insurgents detonated two VBIEDs simultaneously on the Baghdad-Al Kut Highway Bridge and the Old Jisr Diyala Bridge. Until repairs were complete five days later, the insurgents succeeded in blocking traffic into Baghdad from the east side of the Tigris. AQI also waged a conventional IED campaign along the Jisr Diyala-Salman Pak highway. In just over a year, 79 IEDs were found or detonated along the route; fortunately, only five attacks caused casualties. AQI dominated Salman Pak until early 2008, when a combination of several coalition-Sons of Iraq (SoI) operations cleared them from the villages of Ja'ara and Bawi. Finally, a Special Operations Forces (SOF) raid in early February 2008 killed a key AQI leader, captured 30 other fighters, and forced remaining AQI to the sanctuary around Salman Pak. During the rest of its tour, 3rd HBCT hunted the remnants of AQI and worked with the SoI to keep them from returning to the area.

Although Iraq in 2007-2008 is not Algeria or French Indochina in the 1950s, the insurgencies and the counterinsurgencies shared enough similarities in the areas of population control, destruction of the guerilla force, and the eradication of the insurgent's influence that reexamining Trinquier's *Modern Warfare* is a valid proposition. Indeed, a careful look at the two experiences — their successes and their challenges — will serve as a practical tool in the future conduct of modern warfare.

**Figure 2 — Algerian Cell Structure (left) and Hammer Shia Extremist Order of Battle (right)**



*Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*  
(<http://www-cqsc.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/trinquier/trinquier.asp>)





## Control of the population

In his book Colonel Trinquier argued that “control of the masses through tight organization, often through several parallel organizations, is the master weapon of modern warfare.” The 3rd HBCT and the Iraqi Security Forces developed multiple means to control the qada’s 1.2 million inhabitants. Three methods in particular — human terrain mapping and biometric data collection, the establishment of the Sons of Iraq, and the

empowerment of the Iraqi Police to enforce the law in their neighborhoods — proved effective in establishing and maintaining control of the population.

One powerful technique that 3rd HBCT used to control the population was human terrain mapping. This technique involved a systematic collection of information about the populace of the Mada’in Qada. At the grass roots level, 3rd HBCT combat patrols kept meticulous records of their everyday

contacts, especially demographic information such as full names, residence location, tribal affiliation, employment information, and photographs.

The case of A Troop, 3-1 CAV highlights the importance of human terrain mapping. CPT Troy Thomas, the troop commander, identified Al Bataa village as a location used as a staging area for AQI as they moved from the southern belt to Baquba, north of Baghdad. To separate the insurgents from





the rest of the population, CPT Thomas conducted what Trinquier called “a careful census of the entire population” of the village by collecting data and photographs of each male resident from age 16 to 40. He then placed the cards into a binder and had a local sheik and a Sons of Iraq leader vet the information. The 3-1 CAV used that information during subsequent operations to identify and tactically question Iraqis who were new to the area and whose information was not in the binder.

The 3rd HBCT also employed another aspect of human terrain mapping by using the Handheld Inter-agency Identification Detection Equipment (HIIDE) system. This system allowed the

Sledgehammer Brigade to gather biometric data on people, including their pictures, fingerprints, and retinal scans. Our human collection teams (HCTs) would further refine the map through their sources. The brigade also leveraged our Iraqi Advisory Task Force (IQATF) personnel to collect atmospherics and economics data on each of the nahias. In short, the perception of being constantly monitored by intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets and the fact that coalition forces possessed precise personal data influenced the actions (or inactions) of would-be insurgents.

Across the country, Sol has made a remarkable contribution to security, and economic and political progress. Sons of Iraq, which is also known as Concerned Local Citizens (CLCs) or the Awakening, began in the Mada’in Qada in July 2007, almost a year after their inception in Anbar Province. Growing quickly, the brigade recruited almost 6,500 Sunni and Shia Sol between July 2007 and April 2008, and these brave Iraqis helped achieve what Trinquier referred to as the goal of modern warfare: “control of the populace.” In June 2007, prior to the formation of any Sol groups, daily attacks averaged 2.6 in the qada. In April 2008, with the addition of 6,500 Sols, the daily attack average declined to 1.7 per day.

The inaugural Sol group in AO Hammer was established in the small village of al Arafia. Earning \$8 per day, the Sols manned checkpoints, guarded neighborhoods, identified IEDs, turned-in caches, and interdicted the movement of weapons and insurgents. Over 10 months, SolIs provided the brigade with over 200 tips, manned 334 checkpoints, turned in 126 weapons caches, and located 45 IEDs. They increased security in the neighborhoods, decreased freedom of movement for insurgents, and removed IEDs and caches, thereby dramatically increasing security across the qada, slowly cutting off the insurgent from the population, and ultimately helping to break the back of AQI in the Mada’in Qada.

Over the next 10 months, 3rd HBCT used the Arafia model to develop 50 different Sol groups to improve security and degrade insurgent influence over the local population. Trinquier noted that the “total dependence on terrain and population is also the guerrilla’s weak point.” Through the Sons of Iraq, 3rd HBCT exploited insurgents’ dependence on the population, took the terrain and their support from them, and significantly diminished their control of the Mada’in citizens. Additionally, the local economies in Sol-controlled areas blossomed overnight due to the direct stimulus of over \$1 million in salaries each month.

To improve the Mada’in Qada’s 900-strong Iraqi Police force, the Sledgehammer Brigade assigned E Company, 1/125th Infantry and then the 59th Military Police Company as their police transition teams (PTT). “Broad police operations will be performed by the regular police,” Trinquier asserted, “if they are adequate and capable.” Inadequate and incapable of leaving the IP station, the qada’s IP were cowed by the insurgency in April 2007. The IP, under the guidance of the PTT, slowly brought law enforcement back to the qada.

In addition to training on basic police techniques and daily mentoring, the brigade initially focused on increasing the Iraqi Police’s capabilities by helping them track their own crime statistics. Under the coaching of the PTT, each month the Iraqi Police tracked and reported their own crime data. Through this data, 3rd HBCT watched the crime rate decline from 28 murders in February 2007 to only five murders in February 2008. The 2007 murder rate in the Mada’in Qada fell to a rate comparable to Detroit, Michigan in 2006. Once the crime statistics program was in place, the brigade

*Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment search for enemy personnel, weapons caches and IEDs during a joint clearing operation with Concerned Local Citizens January 17 in Ja’ara, Iraq.*

Sergeant Timothy Kingston





encouraged the Iraqi Police to begin enforcing laws and executing warrants issued by judges. In February 2008, the Iraqi Police took the next step and enforced five arrest warrants.

To effectively control the people, Trinquier instructed forces to “cut off the guerilla from the population that sustains him; render the guerilla zones untenable; and coordinate these actions over a wide area.” The 3rd HBCT’s human terrain mapping and biometric data collection process identified and developed data on the population to better isolate the insurgent from his support; the Sons of Iraq groups made former insurgent strongholds dangerous to operate in; and the Iraqi Police began to restore the rule of law in the qada by enforcing laws and executing warrants. Together these techniques helped 3rd HBCT to drain the sea that the qada’s insurgents swam in for so long.

### **Destruction of the guerrilla forces**

Colonel Trinquier states that the goal of modern warfare for the counterinsurgent is to “eliminate from the midst of the population the entire enemy organization.” From March 2007 to April 2008, 3rd HBCT and the Iraqi Security Forces used this as their mantra; the brigade killed more than 160 insurgents and captured 560 more. Although the kinetic operations removed the insurgents off the street, 3rd HBCT used other means to eliminate the insurgents. For example, the brigade engaged in an aggressive campaign to track and interdict the enemy’s finances and developed the skills to produce a solid evidence packet, which could result in a conviction at the Central Criminal Court of Iraq (CCCI). Taken together, these endeavors helped to remove the insurgency from the Mada’in Qada.

The 3rd HBCT understood the need to relentlessly pursue the insurgents both inside the Mada’in Qada and outside it. Over the course of the deployment, 3rd HBCT killed or captured more than 30 brigade or division high value individuals (HVIs). Remarkably, almost half of these HVIs were captured outside of the Mada’in Qada — in places like Baghdad, Tikrit, Samarra, and Abu Ghraib. Typically, just as Trinquier described nearly a half century ago, a coalition operation by one of the battalions would “compel the guerillas (insurgents)...to leave their comfortable hiding places” in the qada and seek refuge outside of the area. Once removed, the insurgent would usually adopt easily targetable habits since they assumed that they were safe. The brigade tracked one target for nearly six months before he was finally captured in Baghdad. This success was due in part to the diligent work of building detailed target packets on the HVIs that could be easily passed to other brigades and the Special Operations community. Relentless pursuit had a tangible effect on the enemy — after detaining two previous Narhwan JAM battalion commanders, the brigade received an intelligence report that no one wanted to assume that role since they realized that they would also be detained by American forces.

Just like the National Liberation Front (FLN) that the French fought in Algeria, 3rd HBCT was confronted by extremist organizations with what Trinquier described as a “financial committee (which) gathered funds from the population at large ...and directly from big companies, banks, leading merchants, etc.” The Narhwan JAM battalion funded their operations through intimidation and harassment of the local population and owners of the brick factory, Narhwan’s largest industry. The extremists extorted nearly 5 million Iraqi Dinar (approximately \$4,200 U.S.) from the owners each week, as the owners understood that refusal to

pay the Shia extremists meant that their factory would be shut down or they might be kidnapped. Through a combination of engagements with local leaders and interrogations of captured extremists, 3rd HBCT intelligence analysts were able to outline the financial network, the process of collecting the funds, and the key players involved in the extortion in and around Narhwan. The brigade then conducted operations that specifically targeted these individuals. In one operation, 3-1 CAV detained seven extortionists immediately after they collected their weekly payment from the brick factory owners. Another operation captured the Shia extremist’s ledgers. With the idea that capturing \$300 (which was the amount the Narhwan Shia extremist group paid a member in monthly salaries) removed another extremist off the street, 3rd HBCT “followed the money” and severely disrupted the Shia extremist group around Narhwan and thus crippled their ability to conduct attacks.

Once an insurgent was detained, 3rd HBCT worked diligently to ensure his conviction through CCCI. The brigade stressed to its units that to be successful at gaining conviction, the units needed to take a law enforcement approach to the insurgency. Toward that end, 3rd HBCT conducted tactical site exploitation (TSE) on each objective to collect, document, and organize evidence for exploitation. Units, with help from the Law Enforcement Professionals (LEP), an MPRI program that coupled experienced law enforcement agents with battalions and brigades, constructed a criminal case file of all unclassified evidence including fingerprints, photographs of caches, videos of attacks, sworn statements from Soldiers and Iraqis, and confessions. The thousands of Iraqi biometric records enrolled in BATS/HIIDE system proved valuable in matching fingerprints found at attack sites. As a result of this meticulous evidence collection (including biometric evidence), the Sledgehammer Brigade directly linked a dozen insurgents to specific IED and IDF attacks by matching fingerprints taken during TSE. Additionally, the weapons intelligence teams (WITs) examined all evidence related to IEDs and EFPs in 3rd HBCT’s AO to identify bomb-making signatures, which allowed the brigade to track numerous IED cells and their tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). As a result of detailed TSE, organized criminal case files, and fingerprint matches to specific IED or EFP attacks, the brigade sent 315 insurgents to the theater internment facility (TIF). In addition, 24 insurgents have been convicted or are pending a conviction at the CCCI.

To destroy an insurgency, Trinquier advises in his book that a counterinsurgent force must methodically pursue it “until the enemy organization is entirely annihilated.” The 3rd HBCT attempted to destroy both Shia and Sunni insurgencies through relentless pursuit of the enemies’ leaders, a focused effort to eliminate the insurgencies funding, and a law enforcement approach to countering the guerrilla. Together, these efforts significantly reduced attacks, emboldened Iraqi Security Forces to enforce the law, and allowed SoI to retake control of their communities. Although the insurgencies in the Mada’in have not been completely annihilated, they have been neutralized to such an extent that by April 2008, laws, the elected political leaders, and local Iraqis had begun to control the future of the qada.

### **Eradication of the guerrilla’s influence on the population**

The goal for both the insurgent and the counterinsurgent in Iraq — as it was for Trinquier — is to control the population. While the





**Figure 3 — With the assistance of the Sons of Iraq, the 3rd HBCT conducted market revitalization projects. The photos above show the Salman Pak Market before (left) and after (right) Operation Market Garden.**

Sunni and Shia insurgents resorted to assassinations, murders, spectacular VBIED and SVEST attacks, and extortion of legitimate businesses to dominate the people, the 3rd HBCT utilized all six lines of operation — security, transition, governance, rule of law, economics, and communications — to manage the people of the Mada'in Qada to purge the insurgency and to tacitly support both coalition forces and the government of Iraq. Some of the more successful policies the 3rd HBCT employed were the reconstruction of the irrigation infrastructure, the rehabilitation of the Narhwan Brick Factory, the direct economic stimulus provided by the Sons of Iraq, and the establishment of the Voice of Mada'in radio station. Collectively, these initiatives, as Trinquier described, worked towards the “eradication of their (the insurgent’s) influence on the population.”

The 3rd HBCT funded over \$37 million in projects during its 14 months in the Mada'in Qada. Several multi-echelon projects played an instrumental role in reducing the insurgency’s influence, as they have an initial impact and they create longer-term, sustainable employment. Two examples stand out. In 2006, insurgents destroyed the huge pumps at the Nine Nissan pump station and the Al Bawi pump station. These pumps fed canals that moved water dozens of kilometers away from the Tigris River so farmers could grow crops. Working with key leaders in the nahias and the qada government, the brigade coordinated and funded the repair of the pump stations over a nine-month period. The difference between the 2007 and the 2008 growing seasons was remarkable — fields that had lain fallow for several years produced crops. Another project with a multi-echelon impact was the Narhwan Brick Factory Complex. In 2007, over half the factories were dormant due to inadequate access to heavy fuel oil (HFO), a by-product from refineries. Once again, the brigade worked with officials from the Baghdad Province and local leaders to ensure that HFO and electricity were available to power the kilns to dry the bricks. After several months of negotiations, the GoI began to move HFO from the Bayji refinery, north of Baghdad, to the brick factories. Dozens of factories reopened and the complex went from providing 750,000 bricks to 3.7 million bricks per day. The increase in HFO also increased employment six fold, from 2,000 workers to 12,000 employees.

As discussed earlier, the Sons of Iraq had a powerful influence on decreasing violence in the Mada'in Qada. They also had a powerful influence on revitalizing the economy. The \$8 paid daily to each Sol member resulted in \$1.7 million in salaries being directly inserted into the local economy, providing an immediate and needed economic stimulus. This stimulus, coupled with the marked increase in security, translated into revitalized neighborhoods. No longer intimidated by extremists and no longer afraid to conduct daily transactions, business owners reopened markets with the help of microgrants. In early 2008, 3rd HBCT conducted a market revitalization project in Salman Pak that cleaned up the market and doubled profits for the store owners since the Sol had money to spend. In areas where 3rd HBCT did not form Sol groups, the economic recovery was much less noticeable.

In early 2007, extremist groups were winning the information war in the Mada'in Qada. Without a constant CF presence and given limited sources of outside information and an abundance of extremist propaganda, the insurgency controlled what local Iraqis saw and heard. They were able to portray CF operations as what Trinquier described as “brutalities in the eyes of the public.” The 3rd HBCT attacked the insurgents’ message through an effective information campaign that used leaflet drops, loudspeaker broadcasts, and face-to-face engagements. IQATF and Tactical PSYOP Teams (TPT) gathered atmospherics following these IO attacks. Using FOB Rustamiyah’s Peace 106 as a model, 3rd HBCT established the qada’s first radio station, FM 107.1. Opened in January 2008 as a joint GoI and CF project, the “Voice of the Mada'in” provided an outlet for Iraqis to express their questions, concerns, and sometimes anger towards their local, tribal and CF leaders. Since most Iraqis receive their information from radio and television, the radio station’s potential impact on extremist information warfare is unlimited. The Voice of the Mada'in radio station gave 3rd HBCT another means with which to thwart extremist messages and spread our message about the bright future for Iraq.

The 3rd HBCT, 3rd ID attacked the Shia and Sunni insurgencies in the Mada'in Qada across all lines of operation. The completion of multi-echelon projects increased crop production and



productivity and employment at the Narhwan Brick Factory Complex. Employment of the Sol provided unemployed males jobs, stimulated the local economy, and led to the reopening of many stores. Finally, the “Voice of the Mada’in” radio station opened lines of communication between ordinary Iraqis and 3rd HBCT and the Qada government. More importantly, these endeavors played an important role in eliminating the insurgents’ control and influence over the Mada’in citizenry.

### Torture

Unfortunately, *Modern Warfare* gained notoriety because of Colonel Trinquier’s advocacy of torture as an acceptable means of defeating an insurgency. He believed that the fear of torture is the only deterrent for the guerilla since “he cannot be treated as an ordinary criminal, nor like a prisoner taken on the battlefield.” The 3rd HBCT’s experience demonstrated the effectiveness of other measures that both deterred insurgents and allowed the brigade to maintain the standards expected of an American unit in the post-Abu Ghraib environment. Many of these measures have already been discussed, such as population control measures, including biometric data collection on adult males, and the relentless pursuit of the enemy.

During its 14 months in Iraq, the brigade captured more than 560 suspected insurgents. In the same time period, military intelligence interrogators in the division holding area-annex (DHAA) conducted more than 1,500 interrogations with each detainee receiving an average of 2.8 interrogations. The system produced 345 intelligence reports, without once resorting to any form of torture. These reports led to numerous operations, both in and outside of the brigade’s area of operations that targeted extremists. More importantly it contradicted Trinquier’s assertion that torture is the only way to develop intelligence on an insurgency and deter the insurgent.

### Challenges

From his experience, Trinquier documented several “errors in fighting the guerilla.” Likewise, 3rd HBCT made several similar missteps in fighting the insurgency in the Mada’in Qada. The ill placement of outposts, the lack of a standardized national ID card, and 3rd HBCT’s initial large sweep operations all presented challenges that the

brigade worked to overcome throughout its tour.

The 3rd HBCT built several outposts in locations where the Soldiers did not contribute as much to controlling the population as they could have. Two of 3rd HBCT’s outposts — Patrol Base Assassin and COP Salie — were perfectly placed in the midst of a town with Iraqi Police or National Police within arms reach. However, the other five — FOB Hammer, COP Cashe, COP Cahill, COP Cleary, and COP Carver — were separated from the population, the ISF, or both. FOB Hammer, although next to an Iraqi Army training compound, FOB Besamiya, was 25 kilometers from any major population center. As a result, the zone of security around the FOB benefited only the few sheep herders who lived in a couple of villages south of the FOB. In retrospect, better positioning of the COPs could have helped the brigade to institute greater control over the 1.2 million citizens of the Mada’in Qada.

The lack of a national identification card also made population control challenging. For 25,000 Iraqi Dinar (about \$13 U.S.) any adult Iraqi could get a Jencia card, as long as two Iraqis vouched for their identification. The 3rd HBCT improvised several solutions to overcome the lack of an ID card, like A Troop, 3-1 CAV’s binder on Al Baata Village, or B Company, 1-15 IN’s Sons of Iraq ID card, but a tough to forge, accurate, and rigorously enforced system of national identification would have made controlling the population less of a challenge.

Prior to the fall of 2007, 3rd HBCT engaged in several large unit sweeps, like Operations Blore Heath I and II, Beach Yellow, and Bull Run. Each of these operations achieved short-term tactical successes — several insurgents killed or captured, multiple caches seized, and a handful of IEDs removed. But each of these operations failed to achieve the destruction of the insurgency since they didn’t emplace a permanent US, ISF, or Sol presence in the villages to keep the insurgent from returning after the operation. In the fall of 2007, the 3rd HBCT commander, COL Grigsby, mandated that all major operations would incorporate Sol to hold the terrain, man checkpoints, and keep the insurgency from returning. Subsequent operations — Tuwaitha Sunrise I and II, Ja’ara Sunrise, Bawi Sunrise, and Durai’ya Sunrise — achieved similar tactical successes, but also

emplaced Sol checkpoints to prevent the insurgents return.

### Conclusion

Five years of counterinsurgency operations in Iraq have taught a generation of American Soldiers some of the best practices to use in counterinsurgency conflicts. In fact, soon, some American Soldiers may boast more COIN experience than their centurion predecessors. Until a 21st century centurion writes *Modern Warfare II: An American View of Counterinsurgency*, Colonel Trinquier’s work will remain a useful guide for leaders conducting modern warfare in Iraq.

Despite the advent of precision-guided munitions, the Internet, unmanned aerial vehicles, Mine Resistant Ambush Protectant (MRAP) vehicles, IEDs and EFPs, the 3rd HBCT’s 14 months of continuous combat in the Mada’in Qada echoed the French experience in French Indochina and Algeria 50 years prior. Together, the principles of controlling the population, destroying the guerilla forces, and eradicating the guerilla’s influence helped the brigade neutralize both a Sunni and a Shia insurgency, initiate the reconciliation process for disenfranchised Sunnis, embolden and enhance the ISF, and improve the Qada government, without forcing the brigade to resort to torture to meet its objectives.

Trinquier’s principles and 14 months of tough counterinsurgency operations have brought significant improvements in the Mada’in Qada. Like the French, the brigade made some mistakes along the way. But by reading *Modern Warfare* and heeding the lessons gained by the American military over the last five years, future American centurions operating in places like Iraq and Afghanistan will be able to build upon the hard-won experience of both Trinquier and the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division to conduct effective COIN operations.

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# MILITARY AWAKENING:

## *Clear, Hold, Build and the Development of Awakening Councils and Iraqi Police*

CAPTAIN MATTHEW M. MCCREARY

*At left, a Soldier from the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment conducts a patrol in Ramadi, Iraq September 27, 2007.*

Specialist Alan Moos

The war in Iraq entered a new phase in 2006 with the introduction of the clear, hold, build concept and the development of Sahwa, or Awakening Councils, to fight back against Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). The Awakening Councils originated when the local populace became disenfranchised with AQI's draconian methods in Anbar province. The success in Ramadi and the surrounding areas has been some of the first real signs of success since the beginning of hostilities in 2003. Moreover, it is the first time the local populace, including Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), have taken a stand against AQI. It is clear the counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy is working, and that we are actually winning over the people, as evidenced by the model being applied across Iraq.

The development of an Awakening Council and an Iraqi Police (IP) station occurred in the Thar Thar region of Iraq in late 2007 using the clear, hold, build concept, and while there is no prescribed method for doing so, the following concept served B Company, 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment well during our recent deployment in 2007-2008. We effectively cleared the area, eliminating any remaining enemy presence and established a permanent presence. We subsequently worked with the newly created Awakening Council to conduct reconstruction and development projects to capitalize on the improved security situation. These actions developed trust with the local populace, leading to increased confidence and ultimately to a viable governing body with functional ISF. Keep in mind that what follows is a model for developing an Awakening Council and an IP station using the clear, hold, build framework.

### **Clear Phase**

Clearing an area is the primary task that must be accomplished

first. According to FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, "regaining control of insurgent areas requires HN (host nation) government to expand operations to secure and support the population." The Thar Thar region fit the mold described in the counterinsurgency manual and was one of the few remaining areas in al Anbar still under control of the Sunni insurgency in late 2007. The entire area had remained an insurgent safe haven since the beginning of hostilities in 2003 for a myriad of reasons, including its remote location, lack of overarching tribal authority, and little to no economic opportunity. In short, the residents lived in the hinterlands, outside of population centers, with little to no economic opportunity, save for farming, smuggling, and hijacking. Moreover, the area, located on the border between Anbar and Salah al Din provinces and around the seams of multiple divisions, proved to be a forgotten world for which no one sought to take responsibility. These factors, combined with AQI being driven out of Ramadi and Fallujah in 2007, contributed to the area being a resident safe haven for Al-Qaeda.

A common theme across Iraq is that the enemy often exists and finds safe haven where there is little to no coalition presence. AQI used the remote setting of the Thar Thar region to bed down and the long stretches of open highway to fund their organization. High-level high value individuals (HVIs) moved throughout the area using various safe houses. Thar Thar was a desolate place and encompassed the area north of Ramadi and Fallujah and northwest of Baghdad, all the way to Samarra. The AQI command and control (C2) structure could operate relatively unimpeded, and they circumnavigated the region, never staying in one location for long, in order to evade capture. It was in this desolate, desert location that the leaders of AQI conducted strategic and operational



planning and staged for attacks into Ramadi, Fallujah, Samarra, and even Baghdad. The reason: no persistent presence from coalition forces and a populace that was tacitly supporting the insurgency. In fact, most of the people in the Thar Thar region had family that was part of AQI. Funding occurred through two avenues. First, there was the hijacking of cargo trucks and travelers that braved the isolated highway between Fallujah and Samarra. Tales of masked men brandishing AK-47s establishing checkpoints along the isolated highway were common. They made the driver pay a toll; however, if he was a Shiite or a member of the Iraqi Police, he would be killed on the spot and have his vehicle stolen. The contents were then taken and sold on the black market for 100-percent profit. The other means consisted of smuggling oil and black market fuel. This fuel from the north was then sold on the side of the roads at makeshift gas stations for high profits. The discovery of caches and human remains confirmed all of this and indicated that the area was vital to AQI. Moreover, human intelligence (HUMINT) and other sources reported the significance of the area, both for funding and as a safe haven for operational and strategic level leaders.

Our initial efforts focused on controlling key areas, namely those once used as safe havens by AQI. Applying the clear, hold, build concept, we secured these areas then expanded to others, reinforcing success. This concept, currently being applied across Iraq, has the following objectives:

- \* Creating a secure physical and psychological environment;
- \* Establishing firm government control of the population and the area; and
- \* Gaining the support of the population as manifested by participation in the government programs to counter the insurgency.

Critical to our success was the partnership and development of Iraqi Security Forces, which consisted of Ministry of Interior (MOI) forces, both Iraqi Police (IP) and Provincial Security Forces (PSF) and Iraqi Army (IA). Conducting operations with ISF required patience and a great deal of hubris. It took time to recognize that the Iraqis were much more adept at garnering intelligence from the local populace. Their ability to gather the information resulted in more effective targeting and the ultimate defeat of the enemy.

That said, a successful counterinsurgency requires “the host nation to defeat or render irrelevant the insurgent forces, uphold the rule of law, and provide a basic level of essential services and security for the population,” according to FM 3-24. Putting the Iraqis in the lead built confidence in the security forces and convinced the population to support our efforts.

Clearance operations served two purposes. First, they succeeded in rooting the enemy out of the area and eliminating organized resistance. Second, and especially because of the ISF, we were able to develop extensive HUMINT networks that facilitated future operations. As the security situation slowly improved and attacks decreased, clearances transitioned into census operations which allowed us to familiarize ourselves with the local populace, thus enabling us to easily identify those that did not belong. Aggressive joint clearance operations with ISF set the conditions to establish permanent presence in the Thar Thar region of Iraq.

There is no timeline established for the clearing process — it is METT-C (mission, equipment, troops, time, civilians) dependent and will vary from situation to situation. As mentioned previously, the clear process evolves into census operations once the security situation improves. This proved to be prime time for identifying local leadership and others that would be willing to work with coalition and ISF. The local populace was disenfranchised and had experienced extreme cases of murder and intimidation. For that reason, they were ready to stand up to the oppressive ways of AQI by banding together, establish a Sahwa (Awakening Council), and work with coalition and ISF to rid the area of AQI. The confidence of the people and the situation on the ground set the conditions for the ultimate creation and development of an Awakening Council during the hold and build phases.

### **Hold Phase**

Permanent presence is the key facet of the hold phase. “The success or failure of the effort depends on effectively and continuously securing the populace, and then on the effectiveness of reestablishing a HN government presence (and operational systems) at the local level,” as stated in FM 3-24. The effective management and implementation of ISF during this phase was critical to our success in the tri-cities and

Thar Thar region. Provincial security forces denied enemy freedom of maneuver by establishing checkpoints over a 25-kilometer stretch of road — our main line of communication with the rear. The IA fulfilled a similar role by establishing checkpoints in the immediate area around our forward operating base (FOB), including a critical checkpoint on the main alternate supply route (ASR) between Anbar and Salah al Din provinces. These actions, coupled with the control of other routes, effectively canalized traffic and allowed us to control personnel in the area.

Our operations during the hold phase, while still conducted jointly, focused on separating the population from the insurgency and establishing a government presence in the area. Clearances and ambushes used force on a continuous basis to ensure the protection of the people in the area. Our continued presence and cooperation with ISF lent credence to our cause and continued to cement confidence in the local populace. Because of this, local leaders bravely stepped forward and put forth the following request to the Sahwa al Anbar:

“We the undersigned ask your approval to open a Sahwa office in al Thar Thar for the purpose of chasing and fighting terrorists in the area between Thura Dajla, Saddamiya, and Muthana, whereby, this area became a safe haven for the terrorists, al Qaeda organizations, and the Islamic State. As much as we have capabilities to chase them and confine their activities that took course against innocent people, we are ready for this office and we nominate Mr. Mussa ‘Abid Fayyad Hasan as head of this office with appreciation and respect.”

Their formal request for recognition was honored, and the first task upon conception was to identify members of the council and to set up an introductory meeting. Critical to this event was for all key players to be present: coalition, IA, and MOI. It was important to work as a team from the start in order to synchronize efforts and demonstrate resolve for the cause. The initial meeting was critical because this was an opportunity to set the tone of the organization, outline goals and objectives, and discuss the importance of trust. Enough emphasis cannot be placed on trust — trust in our new Iraqi partners and their trust in us. It is imperative that there is an effective information flow and sense of transparency in order to further develop



confidence and minimize deception. Many of the pitfalls encountered throughout the war in Iraq can be attributed to our lack of trust in Iraqis and their lack of trust in us. Working together to defeat the terrorists mandates that trust remain paramount and that Iraqis choose sides. This was the point that the community and their leaders stepped forward to work with coalition forces.

It is important to begin working together immediately. One way is to establish fixed site security contracts for key pieces of infrastructure with guards coming from the population. This was one of the first contracted projects with the Awakening Council and contributed to overall confidence and the security situation of the area. Moreover, it freed up IA and MOI personnel to focus on other regions and targets provided through HUMINT from the local populace. Personnel for fixed site security were screened through the biometric automated tool set (BATS) and issued identification cards, thus legitimizing their position and establishing a control to track personnel in the area. Another point of discussion was the procurement of weapons for security guards and, in the future, Iraqi Police. One method was to use confiscated weapons from weapons caches and distribute these to the appropriate personnel. Key to any distribution program

is the establishment of accountability from the outset. This instills discipline and reinforces control and legitimacy.

Reconstruction efforts during this phase, besides the aforementioned fixed site security missions, included projects to improve economic, social, cultural, and medical needs. The Awakening Council was the consummate point of contact for all actions relating to the local situation. As stated in FM 3-24, "Actions speak louder than words. Once the insurgent political infrastructure has been destroyed and local leaders begin to establish themselves, any necessary political reforms can be implemented." The populace wants results and the most effective way to do this is through reconstruction projects that have an immediate impact. Humanitarian aid projects, consisting of basic food and quality of life staples, along with basic day labor projects to clean the area are quick and easy projects that have immediate effects. Their impact is readily visible, and they employ young males from the community who may otherwise be involved in illicit activity. In addition, FM 3-24 states that projects that "provide an overt and direct benefit for the population" should be initiated during this fragile period. Simple

things like seed distribution for farmers, digging of wells, trash clean up projects, and road improvements help to reconcile the local populace and boost confidence.

The creation of a governing council requires constant coalition intervention — both to boost confidence and for directional support. The hold phase is the period in which the Awakening Council can truly develop and become a viable governing body for the area. Meetings should have a preestablished agenda and should focus, but not be limited to, the following areas: security situation, current problems that need to be addressed, active project status, pending project status, and future projects. Having a preestablished agenda cannot be stressed enough. It lends professionalism to the organization and demonstrates legitimacy to those present. Reviewing the current security situation allows the Iraqis to reflect on all they've accomplished and to pass the word in an open forum — an opportunity to conduct information operations to defeat the enemy. When council

*During a mission near Ramadi, Iraq, a Soldier with the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armored Regiment watches a group of Iraqi policemen search an area.*

Specialist Alan Moos





members raise issues and discuss current problems through discourse, they are able to reach a consensus by vote, thus operating as a true democratic governing body. Finally, the review of projects, both past, active and pending, allows contractors to have visibility on status (this gets back to transparency) and provides the council situational awareness of development in the area. Critical to the entire council meeting is the inclusion of the battalion and company civil-military operations officer. His knowledge base and focus on civil-military operations is crucial to passing info and starting new projects. As things improve, the natural progression is to have a local IP station to secure the local area.

The development of Iraqi Police station in Thar Thar occurred during the hold phase. It was a smooth transition from fixed-site security guards to IPs. With that said, the conditions must be set, and the local populace and government must be ready to support an IP station in the area. In turn, the IPs can perform duties once fulfilled by coalition and IA forces.

*“Combating insurgency requires a police force that is visible day and night. The host nation will not gain legitimacy if the populace believes that insurgents and criminal bands control the city and village streets.”*

**— FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency**

The weight of the entire battalion should be put behind this venture in order to influence the MOI of the necessity of an IP station in a particular area. Often, it requires a persistent lobby to convince provincial authorities of the necessity, especially when there are a finite number of slots for a particular province. The development of an IP station consists of screening, training, and ultimately operating.

The screening process can be facilitated through the Awakening Council. The council provides a venue to pass information throughout the area, as well as a recruiting platform to organize potential volunteers. The recruiting center should be in a safe and well secured area. Conducting a joint recruiting/screening with IA is an effective method that demonstrates cooperation and reinforces confidence. The screening process should include “a clear set of appropriate mental, physical, and moral standards,” according to FM 3-24, and personnel should be registered in the BATS system to cross-reference individuals with prior reports or who are on “alert” status. In addition to basic security checks, personnel should declare non-affiliation with illegal nationalist or insurgent organizations. Also, personnel should be medically screened and be tested for physical fitness. A potential problem is the differing demographics of the recruits. Ensure there is a plan in place to deal with disaffection and angst regarding the tribal affiliation and ethnicity of recruits. IP recruits should reflect all major demographic groups to ensure equality. Of prime importance during the recruiting/screening process is the identification of potential leadership for the station. The best candidates have prior military or police experience, are mature, and eager to combat insurgents in the area. Moreover, leaders from the immediate area who have a vested interest in the overall security situation are the best choices. Once personnel are selected, the training process can begin.

The training process will again be facilitated by the Awakening Council and is aimed at ensuring recruits are capable of basic weapons handling, small unit tactics, special weapons employment,

convoy escort, riot control, traffic control, and prisoner/detainee handling and processing. The Sahwa council continues to be the medium to pass information, especially because the members have a vested interest in the situation in the area. Also, they are accountable to the people they represent, thus they are eager to be part of a successful IP station. Iraqi Army and coalition trainers, working as an interagency operation, were an effective team to train recruits. Security was of primary importance during the screening and training process.

**Build Phase**

The hold phase will merge into the build phase as IA and IPs are effectively securing the area and ensuring the protection of the people. Contact with the population is critical in order to prevent insurgents from re-infiltrating the social fabric. During the build phase, Iraqis are fully securing themselves, both IA and IP, with coalition in overwatch. FM 3-24 states that “Contact with the population is critical to the success of the local COIN effort. Actions designed to completely eliminate the remaining covert insurgent political infrastructure must be continued, as its presence will continue to threaten and influence people.” In short, the goal of security forces is to root out, using well developed HUMINT networks, and destroy any remnants of insurgents in the area.

Projects during this phase continue to be funded through CERP and should be designed to improve essential services, improve educational facilities, and cultural infrastructure (mosques). The Awakening Council is the primary conduit for projects, ensuring all proposals are vetted through the voting process. One danger is for one contractor to receive all projects. It is good to spread the wealth and disburse contracts across multiple vendors. Projects should transition from small day labors and instead be tailored for a larger audience and be greater in scope. Possibilities include water treatment plants, pump stations, waste disposal, schools, clinics, bridges, and other ventures that benefit the community as a whole. The council should establish priorities and decide which projects they want to pursue. They in turn can work with their coalition partners to propose, contract, and begin the project.

The creation of a governing body and associated security force is no easy task. The development of an Awakening Council and IP station in the Thar Thar region in 2007 was stymied by numerous roadblocks that required creative solutions to overcome. We succeeded in accomplishing our mission and securing the area for myriad reasons – first and foremost was our partnership with ISF and tribal leadership. Second, was our ability to accomplish all tasks within the clear, hold, build framework. We applied the appropriate level of force for the situation and tailored our operations for the circumstances on the ground. When the situation required more draconian methods, we acted and when it required more civil-military operations, we responded accordingly. In short, a successful counterinsurgency campaign can be waged by working with the local populace to establish governing councils and Iraqi police within the clear, hold, build framework.

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## *An Important Weapon in COIN Operations:*

# THE KEY LEADER'S ENGAGEMENT

CAPTAIN JOE CURTIS

**D**uring Operation Enduring Freedom VIII, Havoc Company of Task Force Eagle (1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team) maintained the unique responsibility of executing counterinsurgency (COIN) operations in an area of Afghanistan roughly equal to that of the remainder of the battalion. Taken at its greatest dimensions, our area of operations (AO) measured 106 kilometers north to south and 71 kilometers east to west. This roughly 7,000 square kilometers of very sparsely-wooded mountainous desert comprised the three separate districts of Surobi, Charbaran and Gomal; all within Paktika Province of Regional Command (RC) East. Two of these districts, Charbaran and Gomal, were ones that had seen absolute minimal effort put forth within all lines of operation (LoO) in the more than six years of coalition force (CF) operations in RC East. With Charbaran and Gomal Districts lacking any true road networks and virtually no influential or widely regarded population centers, COIN efforts seemed daunting. The unique challenges of our battlespace forced us to maximize our efforts in every LoO; especially in the governance LoO, with particular emphasis in counter-corruption efforts. In these efforts, the key leader's engagement (KLE) was our greatest weapon.

With Havoc Company elements typically conducting five to seven hours of movement to arrive at a population center, the need to make every minute of the KLE have lasting impact cannot be overstated. The "tyranny of distance" that dominated all our planning considerations within AO Havoc obligated us to closely review our KLE procedures. What follows is a road map for best achieving the desired outcome of each KLE. The recommendations are intended to serve a small unit leader in addressing the most dominant planning considerations of the KLE. Each of these planning considerations is presented with the singular goal of making each moment spent within the KLE productive and efficient. Havoc Company leaders arrived at these recommendations through tough lessons learned in several inefficient and sometimes difficult KLEs in Gomal, Surobi and Charbaran Districts. Our goal is to thwart such unproductive and painstaking hours for other small unit leaders operating in eastern Afghanistan and pass on lessons that will afford a greater likelihood to achieve immediate desired effects and a greater opportunity to build meaningful bonds with your local Afghan leaders.

### **Our Unique Challenges**

The battlespace allocated to Havoc Company was, in its greatest majority, uninhabited and inhospitable; being decidedly unable to support any type of subsistence farming of even the greatest efforts. The few groupings of qualats (high-walled, multiple family-dwelling



courtyards) that represented each village were usually positioned within the battlespace simply because of their adjacent location to a small section of semi-fertile land and decidedly not because of their proximity to a trafficable LoC. Furthering the hardships in Gomal and Charbaran, the lack of any year-round effective roads barred any successful centers of commerce from fully developing. The only considerable volume of trading or traffic in AO Havoc was in support of the illegal practice of timber logging. Even with the very lucrative nature of this practice, there were few Afghans who benefited from it, and extreme poverty was the norm throughout our battlespace. Throughout Gomal, and especially in Charbaran, there existed a wide-ranging indifference for

change and no true understanding of what was possible with future change brought by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA). Surobi was the only area demonstrating any progress in the LoOs, but this was due only to its high number of residents who preserved an association with government corruption at the national level. Surobi remained the "hidden retreat" for many corrupt officials, and it benefited somewhat because of this fact — yet gains were limited and isolated at best. As a rule, all these social and economic factors (along with the incredibly irresistible lure of rapid income from al Qaeda, Hezb-I Islam/Gulbuddin (HiG) and Taliban elements in-transit) set conditions in Surobi, Charbaran and Gomal that made it very difficult to influence the human terrain in the COIN fight.

However permissible the conditions in AO Havoc might seem for anti-coalition militant (ACM) efforts, ACMs were also subjected to the same difficult dynamics of both the human and geographic terrain. No operational advantage existed for any of the population centers, and no major routes existed — thus nothing to tax or outrightly control. With these impediments, movement facilitation was arduous and risky and those who assisted ACMs were very well rewarded. This led to corruption of the highest order — as high as our local Afghan Border Police Kandak (battalion) commander.

Our greatest strength in confronting the corruption and the social and economic conditions was our mobility, which afforded us the chance to extend our reach to any of the villages within our battlespace. But, that strength came at a very high price if solely in regards to the time invested into each grueling inbound and outbound movement. The time invested was not the only concern as these prolonged movements on the unimproved routes proved extremely taxing on both men and equipment. Balancing the need to conduct engagements in the most remote corners of our battlespace with the impacts of Soldier fatigue and recurrent vehicle damage, we arrived at a 72-hour patrol as the ideal. After factoring in the number of villages deemed critical to maintain presence in



and overlaying the 72-hour model, we discovered that we could effectively expect to conduct a KLE at most once every two weeks and at a minimum once a month in each of our villages of interest. Because our visits were so infrequent, we had to increase the accuracy of our greatest weapon in the COIN fight — KLEs.

### **Why the KLE is the Greatest Weapon in COIN**

In combating the insurgency in eastern Afghanistan, it is very easy for leaders to become overly focused on kinetic operations. It is characteristic of our culture to demand success from below and be eager to report success to those above; and it is immeasurably easier to prove success against an armed enemy than it is to gauge and prove success within a population. In direct action operations, the metrics are obvious and the feedback near-instantaneous. In winning the population, the feedback is terribly sluggish, very often unclear, and always subject to unique cultural perspective for tribal affiliation or ethnic population. This makes metrics for winning the population nearly impossible to record, and the pressure to demonstrate success through metrics provokes many leaders to place secondary efforts on the population and primary effort on generating enemy killed in action (EKIA).

The hard-fought and time intensive tasks of engaging leaders and countering negative thoughts with increased hope and greater understanding provide genuine progress in winning the population. Generating a confidence that change will bring about greater opportunity, building a commitment to the harder right rather than passive compliance with the general wrong, and inspiring Afghans that they can have a hand in their own future is really what will truly win the population. Providing reason for hope and demonstrating genuine concern is possible only through dialogue with those whose future would be affected by such change. The KLE is the only tool that presents the opportunity to influence the population in this manner. The KLE is the only tool that affords a legitimate and socially agreeable reason to enter a village. The KLE confirms your role as the CF leader responsible for the area and interested in its circumstances. Most importantly, the KLE legitimizes the idea that CF work for the Afghan people and creates an outlook of

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approachability of your own forces that bolsters the idea that we are an invited force by the GIRoA. The KLE effectively “undemonizes” the “infidel-forces” and ties you to the people and their distinctive issues and concerns. For all these reasons, the KLE is the greatest weapon in creating change within the perceptions of the Afghan people.

### **Identifying the Leader’s Engagement**

CF elements are typically filled with eager and determined leaders and junior leaders and, because determined leaders are always seeking effects attainment, we will frequently confuse a relationship-building meeting with a KLE. A relationship-building meeting is one in which the small unit leader attempts to gain the allegiance of a local national (LN) leader. With the error of misidentification, some leaders will focus on effects attainment when it is best to focus on building allegiances and will conversely undermine effects attainment by focusing on allegiances during moments of greatest opportunity for attaining effects. To clarify the difference between a relationship-building meeting and a KLE, we recommend that small unit leaders consider the fundamental differences in structure and philosophy in a personal counseling session and in a battalion training meeting. The counseling session being the analogy for the relationship-building meeting and the battalion training meeting being analogous to the KLE. Similar to a counseling session, the relationship-building meeting is private in nature and focuses on the individuals and

their personal interaction as part of a larger organization — comments will focus on how to keep the relationship strong and best benefit the individual and the organization. This personal exchange will build the foundation for success in later and more pressing public interactions. And, just as a battalion commander would conduct an initial counseling session with a newly arrived company commander prior to his first training meeting, the small unit leader would be best advised to meet with a new mayor or sub-governor in a relationship-building meeting prior to entering a KLE.

Because the leader’s engagement, again like the training meeting, is a large forum of power brokers who will voice separate concerns and compete for limited resources, the KLE has a uniquely different purpose, a unique approach to success, and therefore absolutely requires structure and preparation. The next paragraphs will address this preparation and the minimal preparation TM Havoc leaders would recommend prior to initiation of a KLE.

### **Preparing for the KLE**

**The Audience** — In order for the small unit leader to maximize effects in conducting the KLE, it is next necessary that he enter the engagement well aware of what emotions he wants to elicit from his audience. This has two implications for the small unit leader. First, it implies that he has identified his audience, and second, it implies that he has identified how he would like them specifically to react to the KLE. It is through identification of these two critical characteristics that he will be able to best structure his approach toward his objective. In identifying the audience, the leader conducting the engagement can ensure that his comments are appropriate in regards to the level of ceremony or level of candor required by the audience. Consider that an engagement held with an audience of angry and accusatory family members of a deceased LN leader will be distinctly different than an engagement held with an audience of bazaar shop keepers desiring solar lights for their street. Knowing the dynamics of the audience in each case is critical to tailoring your approach for best effects. In identifying the way you would choose to have your audience react to the KLE you create a safety system to help you avoid cultural pitfalls that might inadvertently dominate your audience’s



perceptions and steer them away from your desired effects. In the process of identifying how you want your audience to react, you should question your cultural advisors about how best to arrive at that reaction. You will often find that an approach intuitive through a western world perspective is not necessarily the same approach as is acceptable in the Afghan culture.

**The objective of the KLE** — Your comments at every KLE must be focused on attaining effects. To have such impact, your KLE comments must have a clear objective. This need to achieve effects demands preparation from the small unit leader and the most fundamental step is identifying the answer to the question of: “what do you want to achieve?”

In a critical moment where a leader is afforded no prior planning, that leader should at a minimum write out his desired outcome for the KLE on a note card. That card should be retained and referenced throughout the engagement as a compass to steer his comments in the course of his opportunity to speak during the KLE. This one step will do more than any other in aiding the unprepared leader to achieve the effects he is after. Keeping the KLE objective card as a ready reference is especially useful for those leaders whose debate or public speaking skills are undeveloped and critically important for the leader whose presence of mind is limited. Because the inexperienced speaker will often drift or get easily pulled into peripheral conversations in the course of the KLE, the note card becomes indispensable in keeping on track with the objective. Writing on the note card is simply the forcing function to hold leaders to identifying a stated objective prior to initiating even the first words of conversation. This is the most basic step and must precede absolutely every KLE.

**Agenda** — A possible follow-on action after identifying the objective is to build a tentative agenda for the meeting. This step is entirely optional because any agenda you propose is often muddled and abandoned by the Afghan leaders. Remember that it is never the desire for CF to “run” the KLE. The KLE is always an Afghan-led event and you are merely taking the opportunity to speak in your allotted time. If you find yourself running the meeting, then

the purpose is lost and there is no capacity building as a result of the meeting. The primary speaker should always be your Afghan National Police (ANP) chief, your sub-governor, your shurra leader, or your National Directorate of Security (NDS) chief, but never CF. Every effort should be made to avoid CF taking the lead. In the rare, but valid instance of an unanticipated gathering at your combat outpost (COP) or forward operating base (FOB) front gate, CF leaders should never react impulsively. If the elders are forced to wait until a corresponding Afghan leader arrives at your COP or FOB, then bring them water and have your Soldiers unroll a carpet for them to sit on while you apologize for the need to wait — but never take the lead in initiating the meeting without your LN counterpart leader.

The only valid reasoning for fully developing an agenda is if you have coordinated for a coaching and mentoring session with your ANP chief, sub-governor, or shurra leader prior to the KLE. In this case it is fitting to develop the agenda and allocate an hour to walking through the agenda in order to inspire a better sense of KLE management within the Afghan leader.

**Significance** — Writing the objective of the engagement makes immeasurable progress for the small unit leader entering the KLE, but it does not lend immediate significance for the Afghan leader who also attends the KLE. In order to ensure that the KLE members are eager to enter subsequent KLE iterations and eager to support your attack towards the KLE objective, you must identify the Afghan significance in your objective for those that participate in the KLE. This identified significance should also be written out on your note card. It is generally advisable to not make the significance of the KLE the same as your own objective for the KLE, but to nest the significance within your objective. This is crucial because whether you personally achieve your KLE objective or not, there still has to be some significance in the action of attending the KLE for the Afghan leader. You want significance in the information they take away. This will generate effects well beyond the termination of the

*Local nationals and coalition force members meet for a key leader's engagement in a village in the Charbaran District of Paktika Province in November 2007.*

Photos courtesy of author





KLE.

An example objective and significance is as follows: *You conduct a KLE in response to reports of ANP abuse of power. Your cultural advisor tells you that the reports are originating from the fact that the current ANP force is heavily comprised of ethnic Tajiks despite the fact that the locals are ethnic Pashtuns. The subsequent recommended objective of your KLE would be to get elders from the local Pashtun sub-tribe, the Alize, to commit to providing you with 10 police recruits from their tribe. You can easily anticipate that the angered locals feel that the Tajiks do not understand their culture and do not respect local elders. The significance of your own objective for the Afghans would be "greater representation from their tribe will ensure that local elders are better respected by the ANP."*

*\*\* Note that this significance does nothing to address or take action on the alleged abuse of power and shifts it to a positive action-based significance\*\* Even if you do not succeed in getting 10 recruits, you will inspire the Alize tribal leaders to reevaluate their position in committing to local security and the local government. At the termination of the KLE, you will most likely have a commitment for a future KLE from the elders and should only then engage your ANP separately to address the abuse of power allegations.*

More often than not, (as described above) there is significance already nested in the objective of the KLE, but the leader can ensure it is there by asking "why does this matter to them?" In writing out the objective it remains intuitive to the small unit leader why it is important to CF, but this may not lend the same justification in the non-western train of thought for the typical Afghan leader participating in the KLE. If it is easy to identify the "why" for the Afghan leader, then you can expect to attack the objective and have the support of the Afghan members of the KLE. Dependent on the gravitas of the "why" you might expect Afghan support in immediately attacking the objective or it may require slight effort to extract. Either way, their support will be for attacking the KLE objective and not in attacking you. If you struggle to identify "why" your objective is relevant to Afghan leaders, then you will find yourself struggling not only in your efforts toward the objective, but also in

being assailed by the Afghan members of the KLE. If the issue at stake in the KLE is of significance only to CF, then the reaction from the Afghan leaders is sure to be initial apathy followed by increasing resistance if you continue to demand progress toward your own objective. Keep in mind that a perspective of viewing CF as an "occupier" is mistakenly confirmed more and more as you continue to force an issue unimportant to the Afghan population. If you cannot identify Afghan significance in your KLE objective, then it may be best to seek a new objective or to develop an intermediate objective and make progress toward your larger objective through several intermediate KLEs. This submission to a slow iterative process is often the most difficult aspect of the KLE to accept since leaders always seek immediate and demonstrable progress.

**Rehearsals** — To this point you have identified the dynamics of your audience and how you would choose to have them react, and you have identified your objective and its significance to the audience. With all this, you are prepared to execute a rehearsal of the meeting. Similar to rehearsals for kinetic operations, there are many techniques for rehearsals of the KLE. A rehearsal can be a full up execution of all talking points on site or it can be anything less than that as long as it includes the minimum attendees. These minimum attendees should be the primary CF representative and his most trusted cultural advisor. The minimum actions of a KLE rehearsal should include a discussion of recurring themes/common terms with your cultural advisors, a confirmation brief from your cultural advisors in their ability to paraphrase your KLE objective, and a discussion with your cultural advisors on how to achieve your desired reaction within the cross-cultural dynamic. The need to discuss common terms/recurring themes exists because it will often become necessary to explain a concept to your Afghan leaders numerous times. What is not necessary is to explain the concept to your cultural advisor each time during the KLE. Your cultural advisor should only need to be triggered to highlight or describe a common term/recurring theme and should be able to execute quickly on this trigger. This can only happen if he already knows those terms or concepts in depth. The next rehearsal action, the confirmation brief, is necessary to ensure that your cultural advisor is on-

board with your own objective. This is the least time-intensive part of the KLE rehearsal and is simply intended to verify that your own cultural advisor does not harbor any intent to block your efforts because of his own feelings on the issue. The final minimum requirement for any KLE rehearsal is soliciting your cultural advisors suggestion on how to elicit the desired reaction in the Afghan audience. If you've followed our plan thus far, this should already be complete.

**Contingencies** — The execution of rehearsals should prepare you thoroughly for your opportunity to speak in the KLE, but you must also be prepared for the most likely contingencies. The primary contingencies worthy of addressing are: the primary CF speaker departing the KLE, the primary cultural advisor becoming unable to continue, and an early exit from the KLE becoming necessary. Each of these instances should be considered with an alternate named and identified for the primary CF speaker and cultural advisor and a talking point ready to create a face-saving exit from the KLE should a tactical situation warrant your premature departure from the KLE site.

**Setting the conditions** — Often the site for the KLE is selected by the LN leader, but CF can exercise some influence in this process. The ideal site for a KLE is anywhere but a CF location. Consider again the fact that CF should not be responsible for execution of the KLE. By executing a KLE at a CF location, whether it be a COP or FOB, it creates a tendency among the LN leaders to defer to CF for initiation, management and closing of the meeting. This is not the desired course of action, so all efforts should be put forth to avoid the KLE on what would be termed "our ground."

One area where TM Havoc forces had consistent success was in executing KLEs in vicinity of the local multi-tribe mosque. The primary consideration is that the KLE should never happen in the vicinity of a mosque that services only one sub-tribe or one faction within the local population. Ask specifically for the mosque "where everyone is welcome" and utilize a location in that vicinity. This prevents CF from being perceived as being sided with one sub-tribe or faction within the village and ensures that the location established is one that all local power brokers can feel comfortable attending.





*During Operation Winter Stand in January 2008, coalition forces and local national leaders meet in a neutral tribal area of Charbaran District.*

It is important to note that a KLE should never happen within any mosque or within any attached structure that could be misconstrued as part of the adjoining mosque. Even when assurance is received from the local mullah or imam that CF have permission to enter, CF forces should never consider entering the mosque (This occurred only one time in TM Havoc's experience ).

An open courtyard within sight of the mosque or adjacent to the mosque is the location of choice. The next best location is an open farm field outside the village. Here as well, all effort should be made to persuade LN leaders to choose a location that is common-ground for all tribes. Finally, when available, the district center or ANP station is the default location. But, this will be an option available in only one village within each district, and CF must become comfortable working outside of this location in order to gain and maintain the perception that they work for the people.

**Negative influencers** — If your KLE is understood to be an effective forum for making progress in your battlespace, then there will be the inevitable efforts by ACM to sabotage such non-kinetic efforts through both kinetic and non-kinetic means. This article does not address the major concerns of crowd control or site security as those considerations, in and of themselves, are subjects entirely and worthy of their own focus and careful development in a separate professional discussion. This article, however, does recommend actions to prevent non-kinetic ACM efforts against your KLE and focuses those actions on the time frame in which they could be executed with greatest effect — immediately before KLE actually begins.

ACM negative influencers will always be present at or conducting reconnaissance for future presence at these meetings, and efforts must be made to address this action prior to initiating your

for the previous arrest to the one audience who will best receive such justification. This approach will be widely accepted, and CF and ANP efforts will be subsequently supported with vigor. If an opportunity for an arrest prior to the meeting is inadvertently missed, then the most advisable course of action (COA) is to shift your meeting objective to obtaining permission for the arrest of a KLE member during the KLE itself. This is definitely not the preferred COA as it will terminate any further actions or progress that might have been had within the intended KLE. When deemed necessary by the small unit leader, then that leader must be prepared to extend the KLE for a duration of at least twice that anticipated as deliberations regarding the arrest will dominate and absolutely prolong the KLE. Finally, the least advisable COA is to arrest after the KLE. Small unit leaders should avoid this action at all costs as it will create negative perceptions that will be difficult to overcome even in many future iterations of KLEs. These negative perceptions will be capitalized on by ACM Information Operations (IO) efforts and will be widely portrayed as "the CF will arrest you if you attend their meetings." This will result in a marked decline in attendance, interest, and participation in your next KLEs. This works specifically against the overall purpose for executing the KLE in the first place.

### **Executing the KLE**

**Timeliness** — The Afghan culture, like all primitive cultures, retains a concept of time that is spatially based. This is to say that they utilize time and distance interchangeably. When asking for distances between two points, be very prepared to hear responses like "that village is 45 minutes away," or "the cache is two days over that hill." Because the typical valuation of accuracy in such measurements is 90 percent, that also becomes the expected

KLE. In the simplest form, negative influencers must always be excluded or arrested before the KLE begins. Taking any action during or after the KLE will inspire a fear in Afghan members of the KLE that CF "oppressors" will target those who speak against them during the meeting. For this reason you want to exclude negative influencers specifically before the meeting starts. Before any conversations are initiated, you should scan the room to identify any suspected persons and then ask them to depart the vicinity if there is any doubt. In the case of arrests, these should also specifically be completed prior to initiating the KLE. This presents the incredible opportunity to explain such actions and provide justification during the KLE



standard for being accurately on time. That 10 percent of time lost could be considerable. Ten percent of the longest daylight period in Afghanistan could equal up to 90 minutes. Be prepared for attendees in outlying areas to be that late in arriving for the KLE. Such tardiness will only be noted by CF and not even addressed by LNs as an issue worthy of their consideration since it is widely accepted that 90-percent accuracy is the standard. With this fact, do not expect to start on time, but always express the desire to start on time and stress that it is important. Making this point will become tiresome, but you will see the 10 percent error drop to less than 5 percent when your KLEs are consistently scheduled. Finally, most meetings are scheduled to begin between 9 and 10 a.m. This is a time that is accepted as the Afghan standard and will be well received and understood as the natural starting time for any meeting.

**Opening Praise** — Contrary to our western conventions and expectations, the Afghan KLE begins with conversation that does anything but introduce the point of focus and does everything to avoid efficiency. It is only after the first 15-20 minutes of speeches that the KLE actually starts. While most small unit leaders would be comfortable with introducing the main point directly at the outset of the engagement, this is not culturally sound and does not benefit the engagement process. The typical Afghan leader is accustomed to initiating a meeting with a monologue of praise for all others in attendance. The expectation is that each key player will deliver his monologue of praise for the others in attendance prior to any business actually being conducted. This cultural formality often frustrates non-Afghans. Most western leaders would choose to skip this process entirely — and the unseasoned leader will often do so with nothing but negative consequences to follow — but, it is incredibly important to remain patient and tolerate the process. Acknowledging that the KLE is taking place to arrive at some understanding or compromise, the initial appeasement of egos through this exaggerated praise sets the conditions that will allow subsequent negotiations. If one party or the other is more likely to concede or compromise simply because they have been given honors from the outset, then the wait is entirely justified.

Not only should CF leaders tolerate this method of opening the engagement, they should be equally flattering of their Afghan counterparts at the outset of the engagement. In the event that the particular background or accomplishments of a specific Afghan leader are unknown, it would be prudent to praise the particular tribe or region. Examples of these introductory compliments might include the small unit leader thanking the Afghan leaders for their previous efforts, dedication, demonstrated courage, perseverance, etc. Further compliments might be centered on the great history of Afghan warriors and their respect in the international community. The small unit leader should always attempt to close his introductory praise by focusing on the fact that CF are guests of the GIRoA and that the hospitality shown to CF by our “Afghan brothers” is greatly appreciated and will not be forgotten.

**Addressing the KLE Power Brokers** — Recalling that the KLE will be primarily managed by an LN leader, the opportunities for the small unit leader to speak should ideally be very limited. If the LN leader presents the CF with the opportunity to speak after each set of LN comments, then the small unit leader should defer until his comments can make the most impact. In the best case scenario, the small unit leader would allow the LN leader to transition the KLE from the introductory praise to acknowledgment of the meeting’s importance then to introduction of the problem and finally begin his initial approach to the problem. Once this is complete, the LN leader will typically call on the other members of the KLE to speak. The LN leader will first allow those members of the KLE with greatest interest in the problem to speak their perspectives. Only after the major power brokers have introduced their “friction point” or resistance to the LN leader’s own perspective should the CF small unit leader speak. This creates a moment of greatest tension amongst the Afghan members of the KLE and ensures that all interest is peaked. In absolutely every case (even when the power brokers are wrong in their comments), the CF leader should address that he understands the power brokers’ previous comments and appreciates their wise views on the issue. Opening your own comments in this manner allows your words to be better received and prevents the power brokers from “shutting off” when

you voice your views. Even in the event that your stance on the issue is completely opposite that of the power brokers, you should acknowledge that they are wise and very worthy of representing the issue. Then transition into an approach that shows that their views would be correct if the issue were in fact as they see it. Point out that the issue is truly different and how you have a personal stake in the issue.

An example would be: *“Your elders are wise and what they state is true. If coalition forces really didn’t care for this village, then they would not have done anything to address the need for a well. I would agree and would say the same myself if it were the case. But the unknown truth is that coalition forces have taken action on this issue. We do care. I had expected to see the well complete on this visit, but we simply cannot get the well contractor to come here because of his security concerns for moving on the roads. Now we are worried for the people of this village because we truly understand the need for safe drinking water. We need your help in making sure the contractor feels secure to drive here so that together we address our problem — if we can get create a security agreement today then we will see if we can find a new contractor.”*

Such an approach as described above can be structured around the most typical issues raised by power brokers and is an approach that is much better received than if the small unit leader were simply to open his comments by saying “you are wrong, CF do ...”

In the event that the power brokers have a similar perspective to yours, then you can go forward with ease, but you should continue to open by deferring to the wise input from the LN leaders. Go forward with an approach that is based on how you support the power brokers because they are correct. Avoid an approach based on how the power brokers are supporting your perspective because CF are correct. This does nothing to increase reception for your eventual proposal for achieving your KLE objective.

## **Making Progress in the KLE**

**Getting to your Objective** — After addressing the power brokers in a manner that has ensured that they save face when they are wrong or has reinforced their perspective when they are right, you can



**If a member of the KLE makes an emotional outburst and attempts to elicit support, then do not react with your own outburst. Inexperienced small unit leaders often find it difficult to receive an emotional outburst and not return fire. The best course of action is to remain calm, allow the outburst to terminate, and then inform the outburst-generating individual that such actions will not be tolerated and he will be asked to leave if it occurs again.**

now move on to making progress toward your own objective for the KLE. Unfortunately, there is no one secret to success in attaining your objective for the KLE. What we can provide are guidelines that will direct you in the best manner to move towards your objective. These guidelines are generalized since they are intended to support the multitude of objectives that small unit leaders will struggle with in the many and varied KLEs they will conduct.

First, you should always make the objective a shared objective. Make the problem not “your” problem but “our” problem. This has already been emphasized earlier in this article when you sought to identify the “why” for the Afghan members and sought to nest that “why” in your own objective. If you view the objective as a shared objective, then you are already on the right path to achieve at least some progress. If you view the objective as only their problem, then you are in the wrong mind-set to make progress.

Second, in making progress toward your goal, you should never react to emotional outbursts. If a member of the KLE makes an emotional outburst and attempts to elicit support, then do not react with your own outburst. Inexperienced small unit leaders often find it difficult to receive an emotional outburst and not return fire. The best course of action is to remain calm, allow the outburst to terminate, and then inform the outburst-generating individual that such actions will not be tolerated and he will be asked to leave if it occurs again. Further inform him that if he feels strongly, then he will be given an opportunity to speak subsequently but only if he speaks with reason and not emotion. Do nothing to address his emotionally-based negative comments or even allow your own comments and progress to be derailed. Simply return to the point you were covering when the outburst occurred and then continue on.

Last, always put the problem before the solution and never make a promise. In the previous example, note that the problem was clearly stated followed by the proposed solution. Further, note that the solution is structured as a conditional statement for attempted action based on the shared problem. This is clearly done to create the action/conditional reaction clause to your efforts and prevents the common pitfall of making a clear promise. If you create a conditional basis for taking action and always phrase it as your follow-on attempt to attain progress, then you will avoid the trap of making a commitment to deliver.

**General Actions During the KLE** — Be seen taking notes! This has a positive effect on the members of the KLE. Even if you simply write your own speaking notes or reminders, the simple act of writing anything forwards the perception throughout the KLE that you care enough to record the comments and you are genuinely committed. Simply sitting in place and listening will not achieve

anywhere near the same effects.

Use power words and give as much detail as necessary in your examples. Remember that the common Afghan is not exposed to mass media of any form, and his attention can be easily gained by using descriptive and vivid examples. They will remain attentive as long you put effort into painting the picture you want them to see.

Use body language when you desire to make a point. For the same justification as above, don't be afraid to be too theatrical. If you use effective body language, then your comments will be well understood even before your cultural advisor completes his translation.

**Intelligence Gathering** — Inexperienced leaders will often consider the KLE to be a forum to gather intelligence. This is a perspective that is out of synchronization with Afghan culture. It is clearly un-Afghan to speak out against an individual or group in an open forum. Instead it is entirely customary to support and defend an individual or group in a large forum, and it is culturally expected at all costs. This uniquely Afghan social convention is adhered to even when all members in attendance are clearly and firmly aware that the individual or group in question is guilty. What does yield progress in intelligence gathering is identification of your intelligence requirements, a stated commitment to maintain the privacy of any individuals who can provide intelligence, and a stated location to meet after the completion of the KLE for collection of intelligence. You will be surprised to find that often a “break out group” will emerge after the KLE and you will have two or three individuals willing to address your intelligence-gathering efforts. In these smaller follow-on KLEs, you should make every attempt to integrate members of your Human Intelligence Collection Team (HCT) — who should have previously been only passive observers and non-players in the KLE events to that point.

### **Closing the KLE**

**Reinforce Efforts** — In terminating the KLE you should vie for a final opportunity to address the power brokers and should avoid allowing the KLE to close without your comments. If done properly you will have spoken at the outset to deliver praise and spoken to follow the initial round of power broker comments with your own comments and your own efforts to arrive at the objective. Now the small unit leader should be speaking a third time to reinforce his efforts in future progress toward the objective or to summarize an agreement (if one was had in the KLE). In completely closing out the CF statements, the small unit leader should always express his desire to be part of a future KLE because of his vested interest in seeing progress in that particular area.

**Departing with Pashtun-Wali** — The point of expressing desire to attend a future meeting is to solicit an invite from the LN leaders for your attendance for the subsequent KLE. This gains the required support from Afghans known as their social code of Pashtun-Wali. This, according to Afghan convention, requires that the host demonstrate absolute responsibility for his guests. Most importantly it includes a guarantee of security during the next KLE with that tribe/sub-tribe/set of power brokers. Finally it is important to note your pleasure in having been given the honor to participate in the KLE and interact with leaders of such wisdom. This praise should serve to close out your comments and does well to transition to the final speaker who should be the LN leader responsible for managing the meeting. Once comments are complete,



**In structuring your approach to show your commitment to the KLE effectiveness, you should:**

- \* Remember that the KLE is uniquely different from a relationship building meeting.
- \* Identify the dynamics of your audience and how you can appropriately achieve your desired reaction from your audience while adhering to cultural norms.
- \* Write out your KLE objective and keep it handy during your comments in order to steer toward your KLE objective.
- \* Always seek to establish the answer to why your objective is important to Afghan leaders; or else seek a new KLE objective that is.
- \* Execute rehearsals at a minimum with your cultural advisor and have him confirm your approach, his support for your objective, and his understanding of common terms.
- \* Establish alternate speakers and cultural advisors in support of contingencies.
- \* Avoid executing the KLE on a CF FOB or COP but instead look for common tribal ground to execute the KLE.
- \* Address negative influencers prior to initiating the KLE, but never after the KLE.
- \* Accept starting late, but always seek to improve timeliness.
- \* Be accepting of the opening comments of praise and follow such comments with your own praise for the Afghan leaders/culture /tribe/history.
- \* No matter what their stance on the issue, address power brokers as "wise" and well worthy of tackling the problem.
- \* Always make the issue a common one; always seek to display it as "our problem."
- \* In moving towards a solution to the problem, avoid reacting to emotional outbursts; establish the expectation that emotional outbursts will not be tolerated.
- \* When proposing the recommended solution, always put the problem statement before the solution statement.
- \* Always phrase your commitment in an action/conditional-reaction structure in order to avoid making promises.
- \* Work to get an invitation for a future KLE; this guarantees a commitment to security of the site and attendees.
- \* Thank the elders for the opportunity to participate.
- \* Depart quickly.

always seek to depart the location quickly. This prevents you from being approached and solicited by minimal power-players for your attention to their peripheral and often irrelevant issues.

**Summary**

In the COIN fight, the KLE provides the only true progress in winning the population and is the only tool that can build confidence that change will truly bring opportunity. It is the only tool that has effect in inspiring Afghans that they themselves can have control over their own future. It is the only tool that presents the opportunity to influence the population in a socially agreeable manner. Most importantly, the KLE legitimizes the idea that CF are not the demon infidels and are a force that truly cares and has an interest in the problems and challenges faced by the Afghan people.

The previously stated recommendations for conducting a KLE put forth by TM Havoc leaders have been intended to serve small unit leaders in making each moment spent within the KLE absolutely effective. TM Havoc leaders have arrived at these recommendations through tough lessons learned in difficult KLEs in Gomal, Surobi and Charbaran Districts of Paktika Province during OEF VIII, but these recommendations will continue to apply throughout all OEF locations and iterations. Through the future application of these lessons learned in our KLEs, other small unit leaders can enter their own KLEs better prepared to bring positive change to the people of Afghanistan and better prepared to further COIN efforts with the greatest effect in all LoOs. Good luck.

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# Training Notes



## THE USAMU SDM COURSE — A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

MAJOR TYSON ANDREW JOHNSON

I recently attended the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit's (USAMU's) Squad Designated Marksman's (SDM) Course at Fort Benning, Georgia, and I thought folks who love the black rifle might want a range report (limited, of course, to public domain data.)

My USAMU SDM class had Active Army, National Guard, Reserve, and Navy students — and I'm told sometimes there are Air Force and Marine Corps students as well. Of the 40 students in my class, many were in the Guard.

### The Course

During the first day of SDM, I learned more about **precision** shooting out past 600 yards than I had learned from every preliminary marksmanship instruction (PMI) class I attended in nineteen and a half years of service. The military instructors were all "President's Hundred," and there were also civilian coaches from the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP). What an incredible partnership, and the beneficiary is each Soldier-Sailor-Airman-Marine who comes through this course!

We covered, among other things:

- \* Natural point of aim (NPA);
- \* "Settling in" to the weapon, "chipmunk cheek" etc.;
- \* Proper follow through;
- \* The magic of a two-stage 4.5 lb trigger;
- \* The formula for correcting windage ...

(For example, if you are engaging a 400-yard target with a 10 mile an hour cross wind, the wind-induced horizontal/lateral error at the POI will be 16 inches);

- \* You don't need a zero range to zero;
- \* How to engage in "no man's land."

(The average rifleman engages targets from up to 300 yards, the sniper engages from 600 yards on out, but the squad designated marksman is especially trained to use the SDM rifle to engage targets from 300 to 600 yards [and beyond] to the very limit of what heavy Black Hills ammo will do);

- \* How to read the mirage to estimate wind; and

- \* The difference between a "squared off" stance for close quarters marksmanship and "bladed" shooting positions for long range shooting, standing, kneeling, and prone.

The key to shooting is marksmanship fundamentals, calculating wind error, and the often repeated rule, "Focus on the front sight and smooth on the trigger."

I think it's pretty simple and applies no matter what you are shooting. You estimate the wind speed. You estimate wind direction. You estimate range.

Wind speed in mph multiplied by range

in yards ... take that and divide by 10 or 100 to get inches of drift.

For example, wind speed is 5 miles per hour. Distance to target is 500 yards. Five times 500 is 2,500. Then divide by 100, which equals 2.5 minutes of angle. Since a minute of angle is for 100 yards, and since you have five 100-hundred yard spans, you multiply 2.5 times 5. This is 12.5 inches of error if the wind is perpendicular to your round's flight path, or full value. If the wind is coming in at a diagonal, or half value, cut 12.5 in half.

Since the wind can push different caliber/shape rounds differently, this is one way to think about calculating wind error, not simply THE way."

### The Designated Marksman's Rifle

The rifles USAMU issues for the course are commercial off-the-shelf Armalite National Match rifles fitted with a Daniel Defense free-float rail and a Harris bipod.



Major Tyson Andrew Johnson

*The U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit/Civilian Marksmanship Program Designated Marksman Rifles are manufactured by Armalite and equipped with Advanced Combat Optical Gunsights.*



Each rifle is fitted with an Armalite stainless steel National Match barrel with 1-in-8 twist (the bullet makes one complete rifling spin every eight inches it travels down the bore). Each rifle is equipped with a two-stage Armalite match trigger (that breaks clean at 4.5 pounds) and a TAO1 Advanced Combat Optical Gunsight (ACOG). They also have TA31F (chevron aiming reticle) ACOGs, the same issued by the Rapid Fielding Initiative (RFI) Program.

When we got to the range, the ACOG came off, the carry handle was put in its proper place, and we spent the entire day shooting with iron sights out to 500 yards. Before attending this course if you had handed me an M-16/AR-15 rifle and invited me to engage targets at 500 yards, it would have been hit and miss — *mostly miss*.

Some of the Navy guys I talked to one day said their DM rifles are M-14s. When this came up, they said anyone with a traditional sniper rifle such as an M-21, M-24, or M-14 was basically calling themselves out to be a target. The AR allows them to blend in. The Navy guys said they are working toward building SDM rifles like the Armalites.

Hey, one more thing ... not one single malfunction. NOT ONE.

## Training the Trainer

Professionally, part of my job is to ensure that deploying National Guard units get first class training and to certify that training to my state's Adjutant General. Two captains I brought with me to the course are team leaders in our Pre-Mobilization Training Element (PTAE) (two other team leaders would have attended, but they were at other training elsewhere — they will attend the SDM course in September of this year).

The PTAE consists of five teams. Our unit mission is to function as training assistants for deploying National Guard units. We observe/control pre-mobilization training, and if the training was done to standard we certify that to the state's Adjutant General and the commander of their mobilization (MOB) site. If the training was not

done to standard, the units retrain and repeat it at their MOB station.

"One Army, One standard" is the rule. We want all deploying Reserve component units to make excellence their goal — to not settle for substandard training.

## *Focus on the front sight, smooth on the trigger...*

We have to constantly struggle to maintain combat overmatch — the enemy is looking for new ways to kill us, and they aren't relaxing their marksmanship training.

If a target emerges at 400 to 600 yards, what is your average Soldier who barely qualified on a pop up 300-yard course going to do? Make failed attempts to engage and hope to get lucky?

Anything past 300 yards WILL be affected by the wind, and wind, trace, and mirage aren't taught at basic training, so you end up taking pot shots and giving away your position. A couple of missed shots and the enemy will probably know where you are enough to put mortar fire on you. Or if you don't have anyone with the confidence to engage at these ranges they may simply say, "That's too far, sir." *This is where the designated marksman comes in.*

Target identification has always been important, but with heightened scrutiny on incidents where noncombatants are accidentally hit by fire, proper target ID is critically important on today's battlefield. The designated marksman has settled into the first line countersniper role since squad-level DMs are deployed first to put precision fire on enemy targets. The squad-level Soldier with advanced rifle shooting skills helps his unit continue moving forward to control dominant terrain to engage the enemy. Put simply, the DM helps his unit shoot, move, and communicate.

Personally, I wake up planning to be a better Soldier than I was yesterday, and a better trainer — so my Soldiers can 1) Accomplish their mission, and 2) Return home safely. I am always interested in

***SDM Course students and instructors move to the 300-yard line for their first engagement.***

Major Tyson Andrew Johnson







Major Tyson Andrew Johnson

***Exceptionally talented Civilian Marksmanship Program assistant instructors increase the teacher and coach-to-student ratio.***

learning more about anything to do with, shoot, move, and communicate. That's why I became a Soldier ... if you think about it, that's why most became Soldiers! My GI Joe toy came with a gun, not a typewriter. When the shooting starts, your paper-pushing staff officer skills don't matter much.

I am fortunate I am in a position to recommend that each deploying Engineer, Infantry, and Military Police unit send two Soldiers per squad to the DM course. Each squad simply MUST have long range precision fire capability. With the Rapid Fielding Initiative (RFI), Soldiers are being issued TA31s — two per squad — with no training to go with them. The DM course IS that training.

### **The Instructors**

***These NCOs and Civilians are awesome. I have NEVER seen such a well-run course, and I'll be singing their praises at my home station!***

Let's talk a little about the Sergeant Alvin Yorks of the program ... the NCOs who are consummate professionals. They run the program. You don't see their faces or nametapes because I wanted to respect their privacy, but that fails to give them proper credit for their key role in carrying on this program. There is a medium-sized cadre of NCOs. These sergeants are the backbone

of the Army, and the backbone of this SDM program. They have my absolute respect, and my lifelong gratitude!

### **The Civilian Marksmanship Program Military Rifle Instructors**

The guys in the blue coats, the CMP guys — I cannot begin to describe the bank of knowledge these gray-haired guys bring to the table. My assigned coach watched every single shot. He was there to help me figure out my error, and then correct it. "Read the mirage ... Way to work the wind!!!" This guy was smiling every time I looked up, had more energy than I did when I was 20, and it was obvious he loves his job.

In addition to my CMP coach, every shooter had another Soldier serve as his coach on the firing line. Mine was a consummate professional NCO, dedicated to putting lead on target. My left hand placement screwed me up a few times. This just goes to show what a good shooting coach can do for you. I noticed that when my line coach observed an abnormality in my shot — holding breath, jerking my leg, failing to settle into the rifle, tensing up, fighting the recoil, etc. — my shot would be off. At 600 yards almost anything can make you off.

On the other hand, when a coach would say, "You looked relaxed on that one!" the

shot would be GOLDEN.

If you are interested in the CMP and what it offers, go to their Web site: <http://odcmp.com> and check it out. If you look at their programs page, you'll see just how much they are involved in promoting marksmanship in this country. The emphasis is on junior shooters, but there are events for everybody. It's a great organization and worthy of our support.

The CMP military rifle instructors augment the USAMU NCOs. These gentlemen come from a variety of backgrounds but share common experience. All are former military or civilian marksmen who over their careers as service rifle (M1, M14, and M16) shooters have demonstrated mastery of precision marksmanship skills. Most are distinguished riflemen, having ranked highly in military, state, regional, and national rifle championships. Many have ranked in "The President's Hundred" at the National Matches.

Staff Sergeant Emil Praslick of the USAMU wrote:

*"The Civilian Marksmanship Program was created by Congress and the military to prepare civilians for wartime military service. The organization has always had military oversight and roots (the CMP operates under oversight of the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice and Firearms Safety. The board consists of members appointed as Civilian Assistants to the Secretary of the Army).*

*For years, we (the USAMU) have been fighting the good fight in marksmanship. The Service Rifle Team shouldered the burden of train-the-trainers and mobile training teams (MTTs). Our small section (16-20 Soldiers) split our time between competition and training Soldiers. I worked with everybody from Army supply people at Fort Eustis to elements of SOCOM (Special Operations Command) at Bragg and elsewhere.*

*The SDM program grew rapidly after it was introduced — so rapidly we were running out of bodies to support it. We would send four or five AMU Soldiers TDY to train 40-60 troops. We would often have three or more teams out at the same time. A few years ago, then AMU commander, LTC Dave Liwanag, came up with the idea to supplement AMU personnel with CMP-sponsored volunteers. LTC Liwanag's idea*



to use CMP people to augment AMU really saved our bacon.

We were then able to reduce the number of Soldiers needed on each trip and use CMP assistant instructors on the range. Our tempo was made much more efficient.

*"This is the way it works: we run interested and qualified CMP people through our training both in the classroom and on the range. They then meet with us TDY (the CMP pays for their TDY). Everybody wins: we get to train more bodies, and the CMP maintains relevance in the GWOT."*

*"There is currently a major review and refit on marksmanship in the Army. The success of our MTTs and the SDM program has given us a seat at the head table. We now have 3 and 4-star general officer involvement. Hopefully, things will begin to turn around."*

*"I've got a great job. I can't say enough about the value and motivation of the CMP instructors in the SDM program."*

## Developing a Skill and Building Confidence

**This program just works.** We want to help the bad guys assume room temperature as soon as possible: everyone in the United States Army Marksmanship Unit wants the same thing, from the uniformed staff to the CMP guys.

The Army is in a constant state of transformation, and we have to stay ahead of the curve to maintain combat overmatch. The USAMU is a transforming force. What I wonder is why all basic trainees, or at least those who qualify sharpshooter and above, are not given additional training. I'd love to see the USAMU grow in ways to better meet the needs of the rifleman.

We had some really talented shooters in my class ... the source units didn't just send "anyone" — they sent men *who can shoot*. So while I was trying to get first place, honor grad, I was a realist and I knew my place in the pack.

All prone shooting was with a bipod. All standing and kneeling

we had no sling at all, just you and the rifle. I wish I had a sling, but you know I learned I do OK without one.

OK, I scored 179 (out of 200 points possible) ... I can do much better (and plan to!). There were a lot of very good scores. There were two captains on my team who scored 184 and 182. I think the top score was 196.

When you look at all the scores together, there is comparatively little variance, which says quite a bit about the incredible instruction from the NCOs at the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit. Everyone can hit the silhouette — we are all trying to hit a 5-inch "X ring" at 600 yards.

This is a fun course. You need to talk to your readiness NCO and find out who your unit's schools guru is, then get your command to get you a slot. It's one week unless you add the Close Quarters Battle (CQB) Course, then it's two.

Basically this is a CMP Service Rifle Clinic. It's a good course and very fun, but if you've shot service rifle or anything similar the course would be better passed to another Soldier. It is fun, and you will meet great shooters. My main instructor was number one on this year's President's Hundred. Good stuff.

**"I am an expert and I am a professional"**  
— **The Soldier's Creed**

Why should officers attend this course? First of all, they didn't send me to the course — I volunteered. But before I came I verified that there are normally 7 to 15 Soldiers who don't show up, leaving empty firing positions. I ensured I filled one of those available slots, and that I didn't take a slot from any Joes. Besides, when leaders don't understand a training program, they are less likely to ensure its continued support, both with bodies and money. In general we should expect leaders to attend all shoot, move, communicate - based training.

I don't ask my Soldiers to do anything I couldn't do, or wouldn't do. I say, "Follow me." Aim where I am aiming. When I'm up, you're up. When I'm down, you get down. When I stop shooting, you stop shooting. I choose to lead from the front, that is the essence of "Follow Me."

For those who asked why officers are attending, my answer is that it is vital to the future of this program and marksmanship in the Army overall for officers to see and participate in the course. Things have changed in the Army, but there is still a lack of understanding and support



Captain John B. Roache

*The author fires his designated marksman rifle. Note how he places the weight of his head on the buttstock, helping to maintain firing position as the rifle recoils.*





Captain John B. Roache

*A student eyes a target from 400 yards.*

for marksmanship training in the force. Without support by senior officer leadership, these efforts won't survive. We don't go to war to push paper, we use a rifle to engage and kill the enemy. Instead of pushing paper, we need to be punching paper on the range!

Now on the 600 with optics — I want to make it very clear that we aren't trying to hit the silhouette — that would be too easy. We are trying to get a tight group at 600 yards ... does that change anything? Everyone here can hit the 600-yard target, that's not the goal ... the goal is to put them all in a tight 5-inch group. The "spotters" are 3-inch and 5-inch white/black plates, so you want one spotter to cover all five shots at the extended range, if possible.

Well this is part of why I'm so excited about this program — I think in the near future there exists the opportunity to:

- \* Expand this program in terms of visibility among all branches' leadership (Navy and Air Force guys go, too);

- \* Help transform our Army to maintain combat overmatch. The enemy is constantly transforming, adapting TTPs and training/technology — which means we can't stop and we can't accept mediocre training. Every Soldier should hit 40 out of 40 from 50 yards to 300 yards;

- \* Transform BRM (basic rifle

marksmanship) to take advantage of the knowledge and teaching ability of the USAMU shooters.

I'd love to see the day when in basic training the best shooters are automatically sent to a follow-on SDM course to earn the designated marksman additional skill identifier, so that each squad can have a DM in A and B fire teams and two DMs per squad. As a major, I'm an ideas guy — I send the ideas and recommendations

up the chain, but this will require someone with stars on his chest to make it happen! DMs in every squad is a vital component for tomorrow's force structure!

These guys have talked me into shooting the President's Match this August, and I'm committed! I feel at this point after completing the DM course, I can do it. (I would have never thought I could do this prior to meeting these guys!) I used to think of shooting as an art. Either you were born an artist, or you weren't. A lot

of PMI trainers take this same approach, and the Army suffers as a result.

The USAMU trainers/CMP coaches taught us that shooting is more science than art — even someone who was not raised to be a shooter can be taught in a short amount of time to successfully engage long range targets (300 to 600 yards). In fact, placing accurate fire on a 600-yard target is no longer a challenge; the challenge rather is to get them all in the "X-ring," a 5-inch circle in the vital zone of a standard man-sized silhouette. Believe it or not, we all became rather bored with just hitting the target — this course allows you to move on to a higher degree of excellence and to go for the X-ring.

**For those with AKO access, all course materials are online.** All you need to do is the following:

Log on to AKO. Click on "Groups" box at the top. Type in USAMU in the box and click "Find. Click on "Homepage" for USAMU SDM (NOT BRM). Click on USAMU SDM classes again. Select your class and GO!

Class dates, procedures for registering, and other information on USAMU's SDM course can found online at <http://www.usaac.army.mil/amu/sdm/sdm.html>

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**MAJ Tyson Andrew Johnson** is the S-3 for the South Carolina Army National Guard Pre-Mobilization Training Assistance Element at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. A 1991 OCS graduate, he has served as a platoon leader, company commander, and battalion executive officer.

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Captain John B. Roache

*The author stands with a few USAMU instructors who are also members of the USAMU Rifle Team.*



# THE ROLE OF COMBAT LIFESAVERS IN COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS

CAPTAIN BRADLEY W. HUDSON  
STAFF SERGEANT KAREN L. MOODY  
STAFF SERGEANT ROBERT MELTON

The accomplishments, courage and dedication of the combat medic on the battlefield are legendary. Wherever an infantry platoon, artillery battery or tank troop goes, a “Doc” is always there, ready with skilled, competent hands to do his job. As good as the medic is, he can’t be everywhere at once and this is especially true in urban operations or the modern day setting of counterinsurgency operations (COIN).

Immediate far-forward first aid is essential on a widely dispersed and fluid battlefield to prevent Soldiers from dying of wounds. Medical personnel may not be able to reach Soldiers at all points on the battlefield in a timely manner. The combat lifesaver is a nonmedical Soldier trained to provide advanced first aid/lifesaving procedures beyond the level of self aid or buddy aid.

## History

Up to 90 percent of combat deaths occur on the battlefield before the casualties reach a medical treatment facility (MTF). Most of these deaths are inevitable due to trauma, head injuries, and other multisystem injuries associated with combat. However, some conditions such as bleeding from a wound on an arm or leg, tension pneumothorax, and airway problems can be treated on the battlefield. This treatment can be the difference between being a combat death on the battlefield or a recovering Soldier in an MTF. It has been estimated that proper use of self aid, buddy aid, and combat lifesaver skills can reduce battlefield deaths by 15 percent. In combat, functioning as a combat lifesaver is a Soldier’s secondary mission. The primary mission is always a Soldier’s combat duties (Military Occupational Specialty — MOS). The first priority while under fire is to return fire and kill the enemy. Rendering care to injured Soldiers only begins when such care does



Private 1st Class Eric Liesse

*An NCO with the Joint Aid Station shows Soldiers how to administer an IV during a Combat Lifesaver Course given at Joint Task Force Guantanamo’s Camp America June 5.*

not endanger your primary mission. This is when combat lifesaver skills are paramount.

## Training the Combat Lifesaver

The primary mode that the Combat Lifesaver Course (CLC) is offered is through the Army Correspondence Course Program (ACCP) using the group study. In this mode, instructors are provided lesson plans, student self-study materials, written (multiple-choice) examinations, solutions to written examinations, and performance checklists. Training, testing, and grading are conducted under the supervision of qualified medic instructors at the Soldiers’ home stations.

The course consists of 40 credit hours of self-study material, approximately three days of classroom instruction, and testing materials. Testing includes a proctored multiple-choice exam and performance examinations.

During the Leader Training Program at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, the call went out to conduct Combat Lifesaver Courses for the 3rd Infantry Division’s 26th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB). The goal was to train as many personnel as possible to the established standards. Because the course was to be conducted during brigade focus training exercises and taught in a field environment, a change was warranted in the way these classes were normally instructed. Tents were erected to conduct the training and other CLS instructors from within the medical company were identified. Copies of the Combat Lifesaver Student Study Guide were distributed to every company for the participants to study prior to attending to the training.

Without classroom accommodations for the normal PowerPoint presentations, the concentration on hands-on tasks and full



class participation ensured that participants were able to retain the information and understand the material being taught. Instructors conducted demonstrations of all tasks and talked students through every step of how and why each treatment technique was used. Small groups, with a CLS instructor for each group, ensured the students properly comprehended each task. Students took notes, actively participated, and were quizzed constantly on the material throughout each lesson.

During testing, a standard written exam was administered. Afterward, students were moved to combat trauma lanes, set up for hands-on testing in a simulated combat environment. These lanes were similar to those encountered during testing for the Expert Field Medical Badge. Charlie Company, 26th BSB ensured the success of these trauma lanes by focusing the students' training on realistic combat injuries and patient scenarios. Pyrotechnics were employed and Soldiers acting as an opposing force attacked the students to ensure more realistic combat training experience. Soldiers played the part of injured patients, and students were expected to carry them on litters, call in 9-line medical evacuation



Airman 1st Class Stephanie Longoria, USAF

*A Soldier with the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division carries a simulated casualty to safety during a joint forces training event in Avon Park, Florida, June 16.*

(MEDEVAC) requests, fill out field medical cards and successfully treat casualties.

This training methodology offered a more realistic approach than the traditional classroom-based version. Using this hands-on approach was a great success. We executed a successful CLS evolution with a 95 percent passing rate. During the after action review (AAR), the vast majority of students reported how much they enjoyed this class and how the realistic training made them feel more prepared for the upcoming deployment. Soldiers felt that they could accurately provide lifesaving care to their fellow Soldiers should the need arise.

### Duties

Combat Lifesaver (CLS) 2 can be divided into three phases: the first is care under fire; the second is tactical field care; and the third is combat casualty evacuation care. The first phase is under hostile fire and only very limited care can be provided. In the second phase, the CLS and injured Soldier are safe with the CLS free to provide casualty care to the best of his ability. In the third phase, care is rendered during casualty evacuation (CASEVAC). Casualty evacuation refers to the movement of casualties aboard nonmedical vehicles or aircraft. Combat casualty evacuation care is rendered while the casualty is awaiting pickup or is being transported by a nonmedical vehicle.

Care under fire is rendered at the scene of the injury while the CLS and the casualty are still under effective hostile fire. The CLS should return fire as directed or required before providing medical treatment, determine if the casualty is alive or dead, and provide tactical care to the casualty. Reducing or eliminating enemy fire may be more important to the casualty's survival than the treatment provided. When appropriate, the CLS can safely move the casualty to a secure area. Lifesaving care, such as applying a tourniquet to stop bleeding, may be necessary before moving the casualty.

Tactical field care is rendered by the combat lifesaver when no longer under effective hostile fire. Tactical field care also applies to situations in which an injury has occurred on a mission, but there is no hostile fire. Available medical equipment is limited to that carried into the field by the combat lifesaver and individual Soldiers. The CLS must assess and secure the casualty's airway, assess and treat the casualty for chest injuries, and identify and control major bleeding. If the casualty has a significant wound to an extremity or to the trunk (neck, chest, abdomen, or pelvis), is coherent and has a palpable radial pulse, then the CLS should initiate a saline lock. If the casualty has a change in mental status or loses pulse, an IV of saline or Hextend is necessary.

The CASEVAC phase begins with the CLS preparing the casualty for evacuation. If the casualty is to be evacuated by medical transport, the CLS prepares a MEDEVAC request. If medical evacuation is not available, the CLS prepares the casualty for evacuation using nonmedical transportation. If the casualty is unable to walk, transporting the casualty using a SKED® or improvised litter is necessary.

### Traditional Approach

During a conventional, linear-type conflict or engagement, the



intent is to use the combat medic section or platoon as the treatment asset for the company teams. The company medics are attached to those companies and are with them 24 hours a day. The senior medic rides with and works alongside the first sergeant and provides the medical expertise to the company's logistics plan. The combat medic ensures that all combat lifesavers are trained and fully stocked with Class VIII (medical supplies). It is the combat medic's responsibility to run the company casualty collection point (CCP) and provide lifesaving care to patients awaiting transportation to the aid station. The company relies on the combat medic to synchronize evacuation with the aid station. In this role, the company combat medic will become the "ad hoc squad leader" for the company's medical team, which includes the pre-positioned M997/M113 ambulance. As the squad leader, the combat medic will brief the ambulance team on the company's mission and concept of operations. This medic will conduct the pre-combat inspections (PCI) of the ambulance team to ensure that all company PCIs are completed. The company combat medic will supervise all medical care until the patient is MEDEVAC'd to a higher echelon of care. The CLS traditionally provided on-site basic care until the company combat medic arrived or the patient was transported to the CCP for evaluation by the combat medic.

## Counterinsurgency Medical Support – "A Technique"

With both urban and COIN operations, the traditional medical evaluation, care, and transportation of the casualty is a much harder process. Due to both the separation of smaller elements from the company and lack of a linear battlefield, it has become essential that all Soldiers are trained in the tasks of a CLS. It is the care provided by the CLS that will make the difference between life and death for some Soldiers.

The use of combat lifesavers during route-clearing operations is essential on mounted and dismounted missions. Starting with the warning order (WARNO) from the commander, mission templates were established encompassing the beginning to the end of the mission on how patient care would occur if casualties were taken on either mounted or dismounted missions.

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Before each mission, the tactical commander would give the mission brief and the senior medic would brief how casualties would be managed and whether evacuation was to be conducted by air or ground. The method of evacuation would be determined by the medic on the ground depending on the location of the casualty, weather, and the category of the injury. All of these would be relayed via a 9-line MEDEVAC request.

Mounted missions consisted of mostly convoys to other forward operating bases or patrol bases. These missions underscored the need for CLS personnel as there were many more mounted missions than dismounted missions. Medical personnel relied heavily on the CLS in each vehicle to be able to initiate self-care, buddy aid, and first aid techniques at the point of injury. The CLS personnel would evaluate the patient and initiate the appropriate care. When a medic arrived on scene, they would brief the medic and then assist under the direction of the medic. The knowledge of basic care taught in CLS classes gave them a great foundation to build on, and the care they provided saves lives. Each vehicle carried a Warrior Aid & Litter Kit (WALK), a CLS bag, a litter, and a spine board per SOP. Each vehicle was configured the same way to make locating this equipment easier and faster.

In the case of dismounted missions, squad leaders were heavily relied upon to coordinate with the medic to synchronize CLS within each squad. Considering that two medics were present on each dismounted patrol, it was easier to set up a plan of action in the event of casualties. The patrols were usually split into two groups,

each having a medic to ensure the CLS personnel in his group had the required equipment on hand. Each team had two designated CLS personnel, a WALK, CLS bags, and extra equipment to control bleeding according to the SOP for dismounted missions. The chance of encountering casualties was significantly increased on dismounted missions because Soldiers were out of their up-armored vehicles and exposed to small arms fire and dismounted IEDs. The need for CLS personnel was further emphasized due to the fact that there were only five combat medics for 148 personnel assigned. The CLS afforded the medics the additional support to accomplish their mission and also gave the Soldiers confidence that if they were wounded in action, their buddies would be there with the knowledge and skill to keep them alive until the medic could get to them and provide even more definitive care.

## Discussion

Although the combat medic normally attached to each rifle platoon is the Soldier best trained in the treatment of traumatic injury, he can quickly become overwhelmed by the number of casualties needing care. The commander must train selected Soldiers within the platoons to administer enhanced first aid using the combat lifesaver program. The work of these combat lifesavers, plus the buddy-aid efforts of individual Soldiers, eases the burden of the combat medic and allows him to concentrate on the seriously wounded. The medical platoon should plan to care for the mass casualties inherent in combat in urban areas. Combat medics and lifesavers should expect a higher incidence of crushing injuries, eye injuries, burns, and fractures due to falling debris, spall from buildings, rubble, and fire hazards. Additional effects, such as concussive shock and hearing loss due to explosives, should also be expected.

One striking aspect of urban, combat operations is that small units operate independently and end in isolation because of the unusual character of the built-up area. In a city with a block-type arrangement, a rifle company is considered capable of neutralizing a single city block. At first glance, this seems to be a reasonably manageable situation; but as the 180-man





*Soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment transport a trauma victim to a medical evacuation helicopter in Tarniyah, Iraq, September 30, 2007.*

Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Summer M. Anderson, USN

company melts into the hundreds of rooms of the block, the picture becomes clear — control will be difficult and Soldiers will quickly discover that they are alone.

After the Battle of Saigon in 1968, Soldiers remarked that they would often maneuver through several blocks and suddenly discover that someone was missing. Where was he? Was he wounded? Was he dead? Do we stop to look for him or do we carry on? There were similar occurrences in the Battle of Hue where entire detachments could be quickly isolated from the main body by the rapidly changing tactical situation. At no time has this phenomenon of isolation been more obvious than in modern-day Belfast and Londonderry where the size of the operational force in an entire neighborhood is maybe a squad, which hardly warrants having a full-time medic along.

This point seems to bring up some interesting questions. How prepared are our Soldiers to care for themselves or their fellow Soldiers if injured? How well does each Soldier know the part of the city in which he is moving? Enough to look for a missing unit member? Has someone assured that each Soldier carries sufficient emergency medical supplies to care for himself? Are unit members aware of expedient evacuation techniques using improvised litters for evacuation of the critically injured from the eighth floor of a building and over the rubble to a patient collecting point? These and other questions must be answered long before the campaign begins since the actions of each Soldier in these instances will directly affect the ability of the Medical Department to provide assistance. Expressed simply,

there is little which can be done medically for the dead, and that is precisely what can happen to a badly injured Soldier if he is not handled properly from the beginning.

### Summary

To the extent needed to sustain skill proficiency, units should exercise CLS skills during home station training activities (to include field training exercises) and during training deployment (to include rotations through combat training centers). This is crucial in the accomplishment of any mission in the urban or COIN environment. Take the time to ensure all of your Soldiers will be properly cared for on the battlefield.

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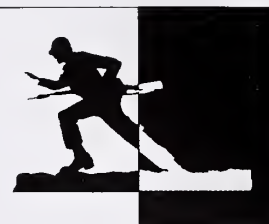
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# Book Reviews



*The Utility of Force. The Art of War in the Modern World.* By General Rupert Smith. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007, 431 pages, \$30. Reviewed by Brigadier General (Retired) Curtis H. O'Sullivan.

Frances Fukuyama announced the end of history and General Rupert Smith the end of war, but both proclamations need to be expanded and clarified. What the general states is that industrial age war, with large conventional armies, is obsolete, and that it is now failing to meet its political objectives. The new paradigm is war amongst people, rather than between states. This creates a dissonance between the organization and training of existing forces and the demands of this new unstructured, amorphous, conflict. Despite the fact it is obsolete, the author devotes the first 149 pages to industrial warfare. He does not intend to give a definitive history but just those parts to illustrate his points. Though it follows a chronological sequence, it is thematic in intent. He writes in a lively style, and the selected material is interesting. He is weak on the lessons from our Civil War, which is understandable, as that period is not his area of expertise and it was a complex, confusing conflagration.

The series of historic paradigms lays the groundwork for his thesis. He then devotes the next 114 pages to military interventions that failed to resolve the political demands; where the battle was won but not the war. He concludes that there may no longer be clear-cut victories as we've known and come to expect; that we may have to accept less than perfect solutions; and that some things may go on forever rather than have a formal ending. Armistices, parades, and treaties are out of style. Smith closes on an encouraging note. All is not lost! We've adapted before and there is no reason we can't again. He offers "what is to be done" in his conclusion.

Notes and a bibliography aren't essential in this type of work but could have been useful. The case studies could have been clearer with a few simple maps. Overall, this is worth reading. Part Three, "War Amongst the

People," is particularly thought provoking.

*Chosen Soldier, The Making of a Special Forces Warrior.* By Dick Couch. New York: Crown Publishing Group, a division of Random House, 2007, 396 pages, \$14.95. Reviewed by Major Keith Everett.

The creation of a Special Forces Soldier is considered by many the toughest training mentally and physically in the world. Dick Couch, the commander of a SEAL platoon in Vietnam, has written his best book yet on the training of elite warriors with this step-by-step walk through of the tough selection process and then the brutal mental and physical strainer each Soldier struggles through to become a Special Forces Soldier. Any individual preparing to develop himself into the most lethal, effective combatant on the battlefield, a Special Forces Soldier, must find time to read *Chosen Soldier* between his ruck sack marches, long distance runs, and push-ups.

At a time when the Special Forces community is expanding exponentially, this work is timely and valuable in its contribution to the story of Army Transformation. Other Soldiers can learn from the Special Forces training regimen. Conventional Soldiers can learn how to fight a counterinsurgency war through OJT and by learning from the experts in counterinsurgency. Conventional Soldiers assigned the difficult task of training Iraqi soldiers must borrow from the Special Forces' methods of training foreign armies to get the job done.

Couch identifies several common denominators present in successful candidates graduating from the Special Forces Qualification Course. The most common factors in successful graduates are: Ranger School completion, a foreign language capability, top notch performances at land navigation at three day and night courses, and the ability to get along well with others.

The Special Forces Preparatory Course is a 30-day training period designed to prepare a Soldier for selection and the Special Forces Qualification Course. After the prep course, is the selection phase. A

key characteristic of the pre-Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) is the difficulty of obstacles in the course. Some of the points require lengthy detours around physical obstacles such as bogs and thick woods. This requires adaptation and a calculated adaptable plan. Conventional Soldiers are trained on a normal Army land navigation course in an area with no obstacles or insignificant obstacle and are accustomed to a straight line approach to each point with frequent compass bearings, a strict adherence to the pace count and sometimes a little help from paths to the points beaten down by thousands of previous Soldiers tromping through the woods to the points. The "secret" to successfully completing the ruck marches in the allotted time is to run/walk them. Each Soldier has to know how much running he can do without damaging his body, especially the feet. A ruck with close to half a Soldier's body weight is an unforgiving, unsympathetic, openly hostile object, or so it seems. During the selection process, psychological and aptitude testing consisting of three basic testing areas is administered. A test measuring a Soldier's ability to adapt and solve problems, the Test for Adult Basic Education (reading and math ability and capability to learn a language) and a version of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (attitudes and behavioral traits). The Selection phase finishes out with tough team building exercises, such as moving a duffel bag filled with 500 pounds of sand along distance to a point on the map culminating with a 20-mile rucksack march for the more physical part of the training.

The actual Special Forces Qualification Course consists of four phases. Phase I ends with some mental exercises called Situational Awareness Reaction Exercises (SARC), since renamed the Human Terrain Adaptability Exercise. Each candidate's response to the given situation will be graded. Totally inappropriate responses will cost perhaps as much as a review board to



discuss one's suitability for Special Forces.

Some candidates are separated from the training after Phase I. The candidates passing on to Phase II will have extensive training in small unit tactics. Phase II begins the actual Special Forces training for overseas work. Regular army Soldiers are returned to their unit for two to six months while the X-ray (Soldiers who enlisted specifically for Special Forces training) will continue some training until the start of Phase II. Historically, one in 10 of the Soldiers choose not to continue the training.

Phase II is described as consisting of tactical scenario after tactical scenario to grade the leadership and fellowship of each candidate under the extremes of sleep and food deprivation over 35 days. Phase III varies according to the MOS selected by the candidate. Special Forces medic training takes a year. The candidates learn not only the material and how to apply it, but they also must be able to teach it to others. This force multiplying ability is what makes a Special Forces Soldier so valuable.

Phase IV builds up and concludes with a Robin Sage exercise where candidates are put in a team and given missions in simulated real world environments. Every thing learned is put to the test and evaluated here. The timing is still intensive and geared at working as an operational detachment. Language training and the survival, evasion, resistance and escape course (SERE) are additional phases to round out a Special Forces Soldier.

Couch's conclusion is the Special Forces Soldier is the most important military person on the battlefield in a counterinsurgency war. Only he has the primary task of blending with the population, digging out our enemies to negotiate, kill or capture them. Any Soldier considering training for Special Forces should start by reading *Chosen Soldier* to get ideas on how best to prepare for and survive the Special Forces training regimen.



SPC Richard Del Vecchi

*Soldiers with the 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division participate in a mission around the city of Mahmudiyah, Iraq, July 3.*

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